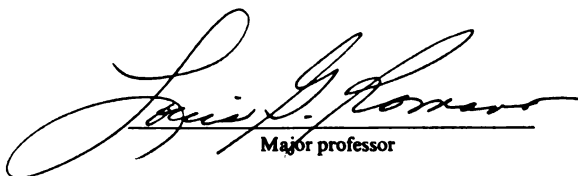2|a 3| 6| S

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dissertation entitled

A PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION STUDY
TO DESCRIBE AND EXPLAIN WHAT OCCURS IN A
BEHAVIOUR AND ADJUSTMENT CLASS

presented by

MARY CECILE SOMME

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

___PH.D.___ degree in ___EDUCATION___

Major professor

Date 4-14-88

A PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION STUDY
TO DESCRIBE AND EXPLAIN WHAT OCCURS
IN A BEHAVIOR AND ADJUSTMENT CLASS

By

Mary Cecile Somme

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

College of Education
Department of Educational Administration

1988

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ABSTRACT

A PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION STUDY
TO DESCRIBE AND EXPLAIN
WHAT OCCURS IN A BEHAVIOR AND ADJUSTMENT CLASS

By

Mary Cecile Somme

This exploratory study was designed to describe and explain what occurs in a Special Education Behavior and Adjustment Class. Specifically, the exploratory questions that guided this research were:

1)   Do the students who are identified as having a behavioral exceptionality have anything other than the exceptionality in common?

2)   What themes emerge in the Behavior and Adjustment Class?

3)   What are the teacher's beliefs about education which support his perspective?

4)   How do the students respond to what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class?

The Behavior and Adjustment Class studied was composed of six students between the ages of ten years, five months and twelve years, five months. The six students had been officially identified by a system-wide Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) as having a 'behavioral' exceptionality.

In order to gain the perspective of teacher or student (insider), methodology employed was participant-observation. The researcher visited the class as often as

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possible over a period of two and a half months. Data sources were fieldnotes from participant-observation, documents, photographs, and casual conversations.

The study found that what occurred in the Behavior and Adjustment Class--the active engagement in learning, a variety of control techniques, the ongoing evaluation and modifications by the teacher--was associated with the classroom teacher's and/or students' perspective. The classroom teacher's perspective was shaped by his goals and beliefs about education as well as his interactions. The students' perspective was shaped by symbolic interaction.

This study is significant for the knowledge it provides about what occurs in one Behavior and Adjustment Class--the activities, processes, and interactions. It provides knowledge of the 'culture'. Indeed, the study is also significant for its implications for possible changes that can be made in the Behavior and Adjustment Class studied, as well as for the implementation of educational practices in other Behavior and Adjustment classes, other Special Education classes and regular classes.

It is necessary, however, that caution be exercised in generalizing from this particular case. Although a case study is concerned with particularization rather than generalizability, some of the findings might be generalizable to other classes.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Charles, and
children, Charlyn, Cathryn Ann
and Chris, with love.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

In Ontario, since the enactment of Special Education legislation, which became effective in September, 1985, educators have experimented with various organizational structures to deal with students who are identified as having a 'behavioral' exceptionality.

This exploratory study investigated a self-contained Special Education Behavior and Adjustment Class—one organizational structure—to describe and explain the behavior, interactions, and activities that occur.

The researcher employed case study design to investigate the Behavior and Adjustment Class. The Behavior and Adjustment Class studied was composed of six students between the ages of ten years, five months and twelve years, five months. The six students had been officially identified by a system-wide Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) as having a 'behavioral' exceptionality.

It was the researcher's goal to develop an understanding of what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class —to describe and explain the behavior, interactions, and activities that take place.

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Exploratory Questions

Erickson points out that fieldwork or "qualitative research" that centers its attention on classroom teaching is a very recent phenomenon in educational research. The key questions in such research are: "What is happening here, specifically? What do these happenings mean to the people engaged in them?"[1]

The researcher sought data which would describe and explain the following exploratory questions:

1) Do the students who are identified as having a behavioral exceptionality have anything other than the exceptionality in common?

2) What themes emerge in the Behavior and Adjustment Class?

3) What are the teacher's beliefs about education which support his perspective?

4) How do the students respond to what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class?

Definition of Terms

The Education Act defines an "exceptional pupil" as

...a pupil whose behavioral, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he is considered to need placement in a special education program by

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[1] Frederick Erickson, "Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching," in The Handbook of Research on Teaching, 3rd edition, edited by Merlin C. Wittrock, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1986), p. 124.

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A <u>behavior exceptionality</u> is "emotional disturbance
and/or social maladjustment." It is further defined as

A learning disorder characterized by
specific behavior problems over such
a period of time, and to such a marked
degree, and of such a nature, as to ad-
versely affect educational performance;
and that may be accompanied by one or
more of the following:

a) an inability to build or to maintain
interpersonal relationships;

b) excessive fears or anxieties;

c) a tendency to compulsive reaction;

d) an inability to learn that cannot be
traced to intellectual, sensory, or
other health factors, or any combin-
ation thereof.[3]

<u>Culture</u> refers to "a way of life belonging to a
designated aggregate of people."[4]

<u>Interaction</u>, according to Charon, "refers to the
fact that individuals interpret each other's acts and

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[2] <u>The Education Act</u>, Revised Statutes of Ontario,
1980, Chapter 129, Sec.1(1), Government of Ontario,
(Toronto: The Ontario Government Bookstore, 1983).

[3] <u>Special Education Handbook</u>, (Toronto: Ministry of
Education, 1984), p. 48.

[4] John J. Honigmann, <u>Understanding Culture</u>, (New
York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), p. 3.

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then come to align their acts in relation to each other."[5]

A perspective is defined by Shibutani as "an ordered view of one's world--what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events and human nature."[6]

Participant-Observation is defined by Persell as "A research method in which the researcher does observation while taking part in the activities of the social group being studied."[7]

A Special Education Program means,

in respect of an exceptional pupil, an
educational program that is based on
and modified by the results of continuous
assessment and evaluation and that includes
a plan containing specific objectives and an
outline of educational services that meets
the needs of the exceptional pupil.[8]

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[5] Joel M. Charon, Symbolic Interactionism, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), p. 152.

[6] Tamotsu Shibutani, "Reference Groups as Perspectives," in Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, edited by Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 161.

[7] Caroline Hodges Persell, Understanding Society, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1984), p. 638.

[8] Special Education Handbook, p. 14.

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Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework underlying the reported
investigation can be characterized by the theory of
symbolic interaction.[9] According to this view, no behavior
is divorced from the social and cultural context in which
it is embedded.

Bogdan states that the subject of the
investigation,

> be it an organization or individuals,
> is not reduced to isolated variables
> or hypotheses, but rather an attempt
> is made to look at it in context,
> from a comprehensive perspective.[10]

Methodology

As might be expected on the basis of the concep-
tual framework of the study, the theory of symbolic
interaction postulates the method of participant-
observation as the most likely methodology to access the
social and cultural context as well as the behavioral
phenomenon being investigated.

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[9]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction,"
in Human Behavior and Social Processes, edited by Arnold
Rose, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1966).

[10]Robert Bogdan, Participant Observation in
Organizational Settings, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse
University Press, 1972), p. 1.

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The advantages of participant-observation
(sometimes referred to as "field study" or "ethnographic
educational research") have been discussed by social
psychologist, Leonard Berkowitz.[11] As noted by Berkowitz,
an advantage of the methodology is that it is realistic
since data are gathered in a natural setting rather than
in the artificial confines of a laboratory setting.

Beekman, too, argues convincingly for field
research. She states that in a field study:

> We want our subjects to be partners
> in the research enterprise. Our
> research is meant to be dialogical,
> as we want to give our subjects a
> voice.[12]

She contends that participant-observation is based
on respect for the child; that,

> in order to understand children's
> experiences we need to observe
> them directly...If we really want
> to explore themes of the lived-world
> of children, the best way is to share
> the actual life of children.[13]

Beekman asserts that by being in the field one
"will participate in the drama of life itself"; one is
"able to perceive the atmosphere"; meaning of what one is

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[11]Leonard Berkowitz, A Survey of Social Psychology,
2nd edition, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981).

[12]Ton Beekman, "Stepping Inside: On Participant
Experience and Bodily Presence In The Field," Journal of
Education, Vol. 168, No. 3, (1986), p. 41.

[13]Ibid., p. 40.

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doing is not "as a concept, but as concrete time and space dimensions"; one is able to "discover the social and personal meanings of one's informants"; and one is able to move "interpretations closer to real life and its consequences."[14]

Furthermore, the method has the advantage of frequently having a good deal of heuristic value (of being suggestive of further research) because a natural setting is always rich in operating variables. Such richness contributes to the development of multiple ideas concerning the variables of interest.

Since this study involved the collection and recording of data about a particular case, the Behavior and Adjustment Class, it employed case study design. Blum and Foos contend that case study design presents a "wealth of information" about a particular group or phenomenon and is "excellent for generating hypotheses."[15]

Blanche Geer has succinctly summarized the procedures of participant-observation as follows:

> A participant observer in the field
> is at one time reporter, interviewer,
> and scientist. On the scene, he gets
> the story of an event by questioning
> participants about what is happening

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[14] Ibid., pp. 42-45.

[15] Milton L. Blum and Paul W. Foos. Data Gathering: Experimental Methods Plus, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 216.

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and why. He fills out the story by
asking people about their relation to
the event, their reactions, opinions,
and its significance. As an interviewer,
he encourages an informant to tell his
story, or supply an expert account of an
organization or group. As a scientist,
he seeks answers to questions by setting
up hypotheses and collecting data with
which to answer them.[16]

In this study, the research questions (delineated
as "exploratory questions") were answered via a number of
procedures common to the method of participant-observation.
Specifically, answers were formulated on the basis of the
following data sources:

1. fieldnotes from participant-observation;

2. casual conversations with students, teacher,
    teacher's aide and pertinent others;

3. documents;

4. photographs; and

5. library research.

The researcher spent as much time as possible in
the setting over a two to three month period. She spent
approximately a quarter of a day, three or four times a
week. She observed in the setting and participated in the
events of the classroom--assuming the role of student or
teacher (participant-as-observer).

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[16]Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field,"
Sociologists at Work, edited by Phillip E. Hammond, (Garden
City, New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 383.

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Limitations of the Study

It must be noted that the methodology is not without its drawbacks. Firstly, the strict control of extraneous factors possible in laboratory studies is not possible in the field. Thus, interpretations of collected data and observances must be correlational or associative rather than causal in nature.

Another drawback of the selected methodology is its lack of statistical measurement precision. Since an investigator wants the setting to remain natural rather than disrupted by his or her presence, the extensive standardized methods of data gathering crucial to statistical measurement precision cannot be undertaken.

A third limitation is that the researcher needs to be "able to write a good narrative where the breath of life is still perceptible."[17] In addition, the researcher needs to be sensitive and insightful.

Significance

This study is significant in terms of the knowledge it provides about what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment

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[17]Ton Beekman, "Stepping Inside: On Participant Experience and Bodily Presence In The Field," p. 44.

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Class. There appear to be no or few studies that have examined behavior, interactions, and activities that occur in a Behavior and Adjustment Class.

According to Spradley, "Cultural description, the central task of ethnography is the first step in understanding the human species."[18] Ethnographic research of a Behavior and Adjustment Class, then, provides knowledge of the particular culture that exists in that class.

Spradley states that,

Perhaps the most striking feature
of human beings is their diversity
...If we are to understand this
diversity, we must begin by carefully
describing it.[19]

Moreover, the study can provide the educational system with information as to the extent of system goal attainment in terms of building interpersonal relation skills in its students with 'behavioral' exceptionalities. By using the method of participant-observation, the study allows a broad view of the multiple factors operating to foster or to obstruct the development of students' interpersonal skills. Thus, the system is able to get a picture of what is currently going on in terms of

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[18] James P. Spradley, The Ethnographic Interview, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 10.

[19] Ibid., p. 10.

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fostering interpersonal relations in students with 'behavioral' exceptionalities.

According to Ball, "The orientation of participant-observation research is toward discovery."[20] Jordan concurs. She claims that classroom ethnography can provide information that helps "generate and shape new classroom practices," and "produces ongoing feedback about how particular classroom practices are working."[21] Consequently, the study has significance in that the broad view explored in the research should allow for the generation of many ideas which may be explored and tested by future researchers interested in Ontario's Special Education classes for students with 'behavioral' exceptionalities. The study may be said to serve as a stepping stone toward a body of research aimed at improving the goal attainment of Special Education classes for children with 'behavioral' exceptionalities.

Furthermore, the study may reveal the usefulness of ethnographic educational research.

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[20]S. J. Ball, "Participant Observation," The International Encyclopedia of Education, Research and Studies, (Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1985), p. 3782.

[21]Cathie Jordan, "Translating Culture: From Ethnographic Information to Educational Program," Anthropology & Education Quarterly, Vol. 16, (1985), p. 111.

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Summary

This study was designed to describe and explain what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class. The exploration of what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class was conducted using participant-observation methodology, a methodology with the advantages of observing behavior in a natural setting and heuristic value, and the disadvantages of general rather than precise data measurement and lack of stringent control possible in laboratory settings. Data were gathered from several sources including fieldnotes from participant-observation, casual conversations, documents, and photographs.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature on the effects of

school failure and on ethnographies.

This study was carried out to describe and explain

what occurs in one Behavior and Adjustment Class. A review

of the literature could find no previous reports of

investigations in Behavior and Adjustment classes.

Since research by Kauffman shows that "school

failure is a frequent concomitant to maladaptive

behavior,"[1] and studies by Morse, Cutler and Fink and by

Rubin and Balow[2] concur that school failure seems to play

an important role in maladaptive behavior, a review of the

literature on the effects of school failure is given.

Additionally, since the study employs the ethno-

graphic technique of participant-observation, a review

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[1]Kauffman, J., <u>Characteristics of Children's
Behavior Disorders</u>, 3rd edition, (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill,
1984), reported in "The Learning-to-Fail Phenomenon as an
Obstacle to Mainstreaming Children With Behavioral
Disorders," by Robert A. Gable, Scott R. McConnell, and C.
Michael Nelson. <u>Monograph in Behavioral Disorders</u>, (Arizona
State University, Teacher Educators for Children with
Behavioral Disorders and Council for Children with
Behavioral Disorders, Summer 1985), Vol. 8, p. 19.

[2]Robert A. Gable; Jo M. Hendrickson; and Clifford
C. Young, report this in "Materials Selection and
Adaptation: Strategies for Combating Curriculum Casualties
Among the Behaviorally Disordered," <u>Monograph in Behavioral
Disorders</u>, p. 10.

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1968), p.

of literature related to ethnography is also presented.

Literature on the Effects of School Failure

What do children who 'fail' gain? Sybil Shack

states that studies indicate that children gain very little

academically, if anything, by repeating a year:

> Studies...show with interesting regularity
> that in most cases...the repetition is of
> little value in raising standing permanently.
> Some children show slightly more success
> during their second year in a grade, but
> later in their school careers demonstrate
> little gain as a result of the repetition
> when their achievement is compared with that
> of other pupils of similar ability and
> achievement who were permitted to continue
> without repetition.[3]

The authors of the 1968 Report of the Ontario

Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in

the Schools of Ontario, Living and Learning, concur with

Shack. They write,

> It has been found that children repeating
> the same classroom routine a second time
> rarely advance their knowledge more than
> two or three months in the ten months of
> exposure...Slow achievers, it has been
> found, accomplished more if they were
> promoted with their age group.[4]

---

[3] Sybil Shack, Armed With A Primer, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965), p. 116.

[4] Report of the Ontario Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario, Living and Learning, (Toronto: The Newton Publishing Co., 1968), p. 62.

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An examination of the data comparing seventh grade pupils in schools with high ratios of overageness and low ratios of overageness, according to Cook, indicates that the,

> ...ranges of two sets of schools are
> surprisingly similar and that the
> promotional policies have not material-
> ly affected the range of achievement.[5]

Research carried out by Bocks also discovered that children who were retained gained little academically. In fact, they may have achieved less than if they had been promoted.[6]

Not only does a child seem to gain little advantage academically by repeating a year, more serious is the question of his self-concept. According to Wrightstone,

> Nonpromotion affects the personality of
> the pupil unfavorably. Clinical studies
> of children who have failed, show that
> there is a loss of self-confidence. Self-
> respect is undermined. The feeling of
> security, so necessary to mental health,
> is usually weakened and feelings of infer-
> iority are increased.[7]

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[5]Walter W. Cook and Theodore Clymer, "Acceleration and Retardation," Individualizing Instruction, Sixty-First Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 199.

[6]William M. Bocks, "Non-Promotion: A Year to Grow?" Educational Leadership 34, 5 (February, 1977), pp. 379-383.

[7]J. W. Wrightstone, Class Organization for Instruction, What Research Says to the Teacher, No. 13, Washington D.C., N.E.A. (May 1957), p. 5.

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A child's self-concept is altered by failure in such a way that he is inclined to lose confidence in himself and have much lower desires for attainment in his schoolwork and in what he hopes to become. Nonpromoted children, thus, tend to set lower goals for themselves and to put forth less effort rather than the contrary.

Prescott asserts that research has indicated that retention has unwholesome effects upon the behavior and adjustment of the child. The nonpromoted child exhibits more troublesome behavior, more inattentiveness, and more discouragement than the promoted child. In addition, he worried about his failure.[8] Prescott seems to express the views of others, such as Buhler, who believe that failure results in guilt feelings and unhappiness.[9]

Goodlad found that students who were older than the typical age for the class in which they were placed were perceived as less popular than their regularly promoted peers.[10] Morrison and Perry support Goodlad's findings. In their studies, they administered sociometric question- naires to students from grades four to grades eight.

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[8] D. A. Prescott, The Child in the Educative Process, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1957), p. 435.

[9] C. Buhler, Childhood Problems and the Teacher, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. 114.

[10] John I. Goodlad, "Some Effects of Promotion Upon Social and Emotional Adjustment of Children," Journal of Experimental Education 22(4), (1954), pp. 301-328.

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Promotion

Morrison found that 86 percent of the students who were older than the typical age scored below the sociometric median for their class; Perry discovered that 90 percent scored below the median.[11]

A study by White and Howard in 1973 concluded that retention was significantly related to lower self-concept. They administered a 100-item self-concept inventory to grade six students in North Carolina. Self-concept scores decreased as the number of grades the pupils failed increased.[12]

Maurie Hillson claims that,

Those who are promoted usually do better,
make better progress, indicate better
mental health habits and adjustments than
do their peers who are retained.[13]

Bossing also concluded that retention harms the students. Furthermore, he found a positive correlation between school failure and high school dropout rates.[14]

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[11]I. E. Morrison and I. F. Perry, "Acceptance of Overage Children By Their Classmates," Elementary School Journal 56, (1956):217-220.

[12]ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, "What Do You Know About Grade Retention and Social Promotion?" NASPA Bulletin 63, (May 1979):136-138.

[13]Maurie Hillson, "Continuous Progress Education," Change and Innovation in Elementary and Secondary Organization, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Co., 1971), p. 60.

[14]Lewis Bossing, "A Review of the Elementary School Promotion/Retention Dilemma," ERIC Ed. 212 362, p. 2.

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Frazier, however, indicates that repeating a grade may be justified in the case of a student who has missed a great deal of school or who is very immature.[15] Goodlad's findings, however, disagree.[16]

Holmes and Matthews identified studies in the literature that were potentially relevant to the issue of nonpromotion. From more than 650 studies in the literature, they used forty-four in a meta-analysis--a method of comparing promoted and nonpromoted students by pooling of the original data found in various studies in a systematic way. They examined the effects of retention (failure) on academic achievement, personal adjustment, self-concept and attitude toward school. They found that the promoted group on the average achieved higher than the nonpromoted group. Indeed, in each of the subareas examined (language arts, reading, mathematics, work study skills, and social studies), failure had a negative effect on the pupils who repeated. In the area of personal adjustment (under which they identified three subareas: social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and behavior), they concluded that the outcomes for promoted pupils were more positive than

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[15]Karen A. Williams, "What Research Says About Grade Retention and Academic Achievement," (Bethesda, Md.:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED. 259 840, 1985), p. 2.

[16]John I. Goodlad, "Some Effects of Promotion Upon Social and Emotional Adjustment of Children," pp. 301-328.

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for retained or nonpromoted students. In addition,
negative effects of nonpromotion were evident in self-
concept and attitude toward school held by nonpromoted
students. Thus, students who were promoted fared better in
all areas than those who repeated.[17]

Literature on Ethnographies

Introduction

There have been "two major theoretical
perspectives" in the social sciences. One perspective,
positivism, is also known as experimental, statistical,
numerical, or quantitative research. A second perspective
is known as naturalistic, as well as "ethnographic,
qualitative, participant observational, case study,
symbolic interactionist, phenomenological, constructivist,
or interpretive."[18] Positivism "seeks the _facts_ or _causes_
of social phenomena with little regard for the subjective
states of individuals"; the naturalistic perspective or
phenomenology "is concerned with _understanding_ human

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[17]C. Thomas Holmes and Kenneth M. Matthews, "The
Effects of Nonpromotion on Elementary and Junior High
School Pupils: A Meta-Analysis," _Review of Educational
Research_, (Summer 1984), Vol. 54, No. 2, pp. 225-236.

[18]Frederick Erickson, "Qualitative Methods in
Research on Teaching," p. 119.

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behavior from the actor's own frame of reference."[19]

As Bogdan asserts, qualitative methodology "directs itself at human settings and individuals in them holistically."[20]

Joan E. Sieber reinforces this. She asserts that "Ethnography is the study of people and their culture."[21]

She claims that,

> The fieldworker stays in the habitat of the host culture for an extended period of time and becomes closely acquainted with one or more members of that culture.[22]

Furthermore, Sieber contends,

> The fieldworker participates in the host culture, and strives to understand it, to learn as far as is possible to speak, think, feel, perceive, and act as a member of that culture, and yet to examine and describe it critically from the trained perspective of his or her own discipline and culture.[23]

As mentioned, holistic ethnographers want to know about the culture in order to appropriately interpret behavior. According to Evelyn Jacob, they

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[19] Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor, Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975), p. 2.

[20] Robert Bogdan, Participant Observation in Organizational Settings, p. 1.

[21] Joan E. Sieber, ed., The Ethics of Social Research Fieldwork, Regulation, and Publication, (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982), p. 1.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

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are interested in a more focused theor-
etical framework or problem but want to
make certain that their study is grounded
in the particular setting being studied.[24]

According to Bogdan,

The purpose of the method (participant-
observation) is to develop understandings
of complex social settings and relation-
ships. It assumes that an important way,
and perhaps the only way, to understand
some areas of social life is to immerse
oneself with others in that social
arrangement.[25]

As Brophy and Good assert, "If classrooms are to be

understood, the social aspects of classrooms must be dealt

with."[26] They claim that,

Quantitative studies help to suggest general
patterns of behavior (eg. How do fourth grade
teachers get achievement gains?), whereas
qualitative studies help to explain why some-
thing occurs in a particular classroom.[27]

Symbolic Interaction

Underlying the methodology of participant-

observation that is evident in ethnography is the theory

of symbolic interaction. As Palonsky states,

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[24] Evelyn Jacob, "Qualitative Research Traditions: A
Review," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 57, Number I,
(Spring 1987), p. 13.

[25] Robert Bogdan, Participant Observation in
Organizational Settings, p. 4.

[26] Jere E. Brophy and Thomas L. Good, Looking In
Classrooms, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), p. 60.

[27] Ibid., p. 82.

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> This view considers man's social inter-
> action with his fellow man to be the
> creating and sustaining force of any
> group or societal concept of what is
> real.[28]

Palonsky asserts that,

> if an individual wants to explore the
> social reality of individuals or groups,
> he should subject himself to the dynamics
> of the social environment and actually
> become part of the group as it engages
> in the processes of creating and sustain-
> ing that reality. The participant-observer
> methodology allows the researcher to assume
> the role of a participant in the social
> setting and engage in the interactions of
> individuals and groups. He is able to take
> part in the group interactions which create
> the social reality for that group.[29]

Blumer, the chief proponent of symbolic inter-

action, states that each of the individuals in a sit-

uation is an actor and that each actor is constantly

interpreting a situation. Man is an actor who acts upon

the meaning which he attaches to other persons' actions.

He defines and redefines other persons' actions; he

constructs and reconstructs other persons' actions.[30]

Man employs symbols and they are these symbols

that give meaning. They are these symbols that make human

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[28]Stuart B. Palonsky, "A Participant Observer
Investigation of the Students and Their Social World
In An Urban, Integrated and Innovative High School."
(Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1974),
p. 3.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction."

interaction unique. They are these symbols that are critical; they are these symbols that make man different from lower animals. As Remender states, "The symbol enables man to respond in terms of his definition of the situation..."[31]

Manis and Meltzer state the central propositions of Symbolic Interaction as follows:

1. Mind, self, and society are most usefully viewed as processes of human and interhuman conduct.

2. Language is the mechanism for the rise of mind and self.

3. Mind is an importation of the social process, that is, of interaction.

4. Human beings construct their behavior in the course of its execution, rather than responding mechanically to either external stimuli or such internal forces as drives, needs, or motives.

5. Human conduct is carried on primarily by defining of situations in which one acts.

6. The socialization of the human being both enmeshes him in society and frees him from society. The individual with a self is not passive but can employ his self in an action from group definitions.[32]

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[31]Peter A. Remender, "Symbolic Interaction and Education: Some Marginal Notes," (A Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971), p. 82.

[32]Jerome Manis and Bernard Meltzer, Symbolic Interaction, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 495.

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The Symbolic Interactionist asserts then that an individual has a self. Not only does an individual being act and react towards others; he acts towards his self reflectively. A human being makes self-indications--a process of defining and redefining oneself. Action is then a series of self-indications; it is a dynamic process. Society is composed of human beings who have selves, and who interact.

According to Kinch, the theory of Symbolic Interaction has three basic propositions:

1. The individual's personality--the distinctive patterns of behavior that characterize him as an individual-- results from and is reinforced by his day-to-day association with those about him.

2. The individual's behavior or conduct follows a direction that is the result of reciprocal give-and-take of inter- dependent men who are adjusting to one another.

3. The culture of the group is a reflection of those agreements about proper conduct that emerge and are reinforced by man's continual communication as people collectively come to terms with life's conditions.[33]

As a man interacts, he chooses a course of action in accordance with his perspective.

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[33]John W. Kinch, Social Psychology, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), p. 11.

Participant-Observation Studies

The participant-observation methodology is a useful tool to learn about group behavior, social interaction, and collective perspectives. It originated during the nineteenth century when anthropologists carried out studies to learn about primitive societies. The anthropologist went into the field to observe and to live in the society. He recorded his observations and then analyzed these.

Ethnographic studies that have been carried out are numerous. Most famous 'general' ones unrelated to education include: Street Corner Society; The Urban Villagers, Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans; Tally's Corner; Five Families; La Vida; and Asylums.

In 1943, Whyte published his Street Corner Society. This classic described the political and social structure of an Italian slum in urban Boston. The main question that guided Whyte's investigation was: "What makes a man a big shot and by what means is he able to dominate the little guys?"[34]

Whyte gathered his information by living in the Italian community for three and a half years and participating in its social and political activities. He was careful to report what he observed and not to judge the activities.

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[34]William F. Whyte, Street Corner Society, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. xix.

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Gans, from October 1957 to May 1958, carried out a field study of an urban Italian community in order to develop an understanding of the life of the poor people who lived there. According to Gans,

> My main research interests were two: to study a slum and to study the way of life of a low income population. I wanted to know what a slum was like and how it felt to live in one.[35]

Tally's Corner, a book which discusses a field study that spanned an eighteen month period, originated from a doctoral dissertation by a student of anthropology. It analyzes the life of 'lower-class' Negro males. The author, Liewbow, states that,

> The focus was on the man as father, husband or other family member, but there were, by design, no firm presumptions of what was or was not relevant. In this sense, there was no detailed research design; the intention was frankly exploratory.[36]

Oscar Lewis, an anthropologist, has conducted many participant-observer studies. In one, he wanted to understand the way of life of five Mexican families who had made a transition from life in a rural area to life in an urban area of Mexico City.[37] In another, he examined the family

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[35]Herbert Gans, The Urban Villagers, Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), pp. ix-x.

[36]Elliott Liewbow, Tally's Corner, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 10.

[37]Oscar Lewis, Five Families, (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1959).

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life of Hispanic peoples.[38]

Goffman used participant-observation methodology to examine "social situations of mental patients and other inmates." Goffman, in his book Asylums, states that although he did not take the role of the hospital inmate, he was able to explain the reality of life as an inmate from the inmate's perspective. He reports,

> It was then and still it is my belief
> that any group of persons--prisoners,
> primitives, pilots, or patients--develop
> a life of their own that becomes meaning-
> ful, reasonable and normal once you get
> close to it, and that a good way to learn
> about any of these worlds is to submit
> oneself in the company of the members to
> the daily round of petty contingencies to
> which they are subjected.[39]

Ethnographic research has become increasingly employed by educators over the past twenty years. Among the most notable educational ethnographies are: Small Town Teacher; Anatomy of Educational Innovation: An Organizational Analysis of an Elementary School; The Man in the Principal's Office: An Ethnography; Making the Grade; Life in Classrooms; The Complexities of an Urban Classroom; West Haven; The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School; and Learning to Labor.

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[38]Oscar Lewis, La Vida, (New York: Random House, 1965).

[39]Erving Goffman, Asylums, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961), pp. ix-x.

Gertrude McPherson, a sociologist, reports a field study that she conducted covertly in a New England school where she was a teacher. In <u>Small Town Teacher</u>, McPherson describes the focus of her study:

> I am looking at the teacher from her own
> point of view. I am concerned with the
> teacher's expectations for herself, for
> pupils, for parents, for the administra-
> tion, and with her responses to the ways
> in which she defines the expectations of
> others toward her.[40]

Smith and Keith tell about being participant-observers in an elementary school which was considered innovative. They investigated patterns of leadership and how change affected the school.[41]

Wolcott's book, <u>The Man in the Principal's Office:</u> <u>An Ethnography</u>, describes the principal as a person; the principal's 'formal' and 'informal' encounters; the "socialization of the principal"; and the impressions that various people--the secretary, teachers, pupils, the superintendent, and parents--have of the principal on which the case study is based. It also describes "A Day in the Life" of a principal. Wolcott states that, "the purpose of the study is to describe and analyze the elementary school

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[40]Gertrude McPherson, <u>Small Town Teacher</u>, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 7.

[41]Louis Smith and Pat Keith, <u>Anatomy of Educational Innovation: An Organizational Analysis of an Elementary School</u>, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1971).

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principalship from a cultural perspective."[42]

Becker, Geer, and Hughes used participant-observation methodology in their study of the grade point average perspective of undergraduates at a university.[43]

Philip Jackson in his book, Life in Classrooms, describes everyday life in elementary classrooms. His purpose, he claims,

> is simply to arouse the reader's interest
> and possibly to awaken his concern over
> aspects of school life that seem to be
> receiving less attention than they deserve.[44]

Smith and Geoffrey provide a social psychological analysis of the complexities of classroom life in The Complexities of an Urban Classroom.[45] Smith spent a year as non-participant-observer in Geoffrey's elementary classroom; Geoffrey took the role of participant-observer. Both kept daily field notes and analyzed the events.

The book, West Haven, is an ethnographic account of activities that occur on a daily basis--recorded over a

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[42]Harry F. Wolcott, The Man in the Principal's Office: An Ethnography, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. xi.

[43]Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, and Everett Hughes, Making the Grade, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968).

[44]Philip Jackson, Life in Classrooms, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. vii.

[45]Louis M. Smith and William Geoffrey, The Complexities of an Urban Classroom, (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968).

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period of nine months--in a preschool classroom through a

sixth grade classroom in a biracial elementary school which

the author, Norris Brock Johnson, names West Haven. 'West

Haven' is located in the rural midwest. Johnson states

that the purpose of his book is

> to describe the social and cultural
> reality of everyday classroom life
> and to note the conditioning effect
> of the process of elementary schooling
> on children.[46]

His thesis is that "public schools and school

classrooms are a small society and culture--a way of life

into which children are initiated and conditioned to

adhere." In other words, "classroom life...is a vehicle

for the social and cultural conditioning of children."[47]

Social conditioning is the process by which

children are "pressed to become part of an ongoing group of

people occupying a specific geographic territory; that is,

to become part of a society." Cultural conditioning is the

process by which children are compelled "to adopt...the

classroom culture as their own." Johnson claims that every

system of education has two common vehicles for social and

cultural conditioning: initiation and rites of passage.

Initiation marks the beginning of a long process in which a

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[46]Norris Brock Johnson, West Haven, Classroom
Culture and Society in a Rural Elementary School, (Chapel
Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 3.

[47]Ibid.

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child is entered into the society and culture. Rites of passage are the "sets of age-related experiences...people undergo in being conditioned to adopt, by stages, a way of life."[48]

He stresses that students are conditioned to order by the school's emphasis on

> temporal and spatial co-ordination, routine housekeeping tasks, ranking, the reinforcement of student self-control, compliance and obedience, regimentation, coming to attention, and waiting. Preschool session events and activities emphasize the initial ordering of student-to-student and student-to-teacher patterns of relationship fundamental to the ongoing way of life of the classroom as a society.[49]

Johnson contends, "A pervasive ideal that teachers at West Haven have is the belief in the perfectibility of each individual child," which means that "given enough time and attention, each child ought to be able to develop his or her maximum potential." He says, that "The reality of schooling, though, is mass education, what Philip Cusick terms the "batch processing" of students."[50]

Johnson mentions that in the middle grades, "student age and ability groupings are becoming further differentiated." He alleges that teachers have varying views on school retention, question the utilization of

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid., p. 51.

[50]Ibid., p. 175.

letter grades, have differing "explanations of the reasons for student classroom success and failure (which) polarize around the color of the teacher."[51]

Johnson makes a potent point:

> If one wanted a mechanism for sorting new generations of citizens into the potentially advantaged and the potentially disadvantaged, one could do no better than to invent the stratified culture and society of ordinary public school classrooms.[52]

Johnson reveals that as one progresses through the grades there is "a gradual reduction in the number of discrete classroom events"; "more classroom time (spent) on work related activities"; "more different kinds of activity occurring"; "a slight reduction in time spent on meals/recess"; and "more complex pattern of scheduling classes."[53] With the latter, "teachers lose a great deal of power," "more teacher time is spent on required bureau-cratic tasks such as taking roll, collecting lunch money, and filling out permission slips for individual student activities." He says that teachers blame the "upper grade pattern of schooling for the bureaucratic intrusions and disruptive students," and for the less amount of time spent

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[51] Ibid., p. 180.

[52] Ibid., p. 183.

[53] Ibid., p. 244.

on academics than in lower grades.[54]

Cusick's book, The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School, examines the "structure of three public secondary schools." He puts forth the thesis that "the keystone of that structure is their commitment to an American version of the egalitarian ideal" which he explains is "to provide each student with an opportunity for social, political, and economical equality."[55]

Cusick's purpose is to use the descriptions and accounts to develop "an abstracted model of the structure common to those schools to explain (his) thesis." He defines structure as "the abstracted coherence that makes sense of the disparate elements." He states that

> While there are, of course, differences
> among the three (public secondary schools)
> ...all three share a similar structure
> and that general structure can be used
> to understand the behaviors and events
> that occur in those places.

And since the three schools are similar "to most secondary schools," the abstracted model "may contribute to our understanding of secondary schools in general."[56]

Cusick states that from the original orientations of the studies, common elements emerged--behaviors,

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[54]Ibid., p. 245.

[55]Philip Cusick, The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School, (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 1.

[56]Ibid., p. 4.

structure, and social values--to combine into a "coherent and intelligible whole" (structure), and the "linchpin of the structure in all three schools was the commitment to the egalitarian ideal." He argues this thesis well.

The book, <u>Learning to Labor</u>, consists of two parts. The first part "presents an ethnography of the male white working class counter-school culture" and the transition of the group, 'the lads', from school to work. The second part is 'more theoretical';

> ...it analyzes the inner meaning, ration-
> ality and dynamic of the cultural process
> recorded earlier (in Part I), and the ways
> in which they contribute, on the one hand,
> to working class culture in general, and
> on the other, more unexpectedly, to the
> maintenance and reproduction of the social
> order.[57]

Willis writes that the main purpose of his book is "to cast some light on the process by which working class kids get working class jobs." He presents a plausible theory and explains it well--"how kids, through their own activity and ideological development reproduce themselves as a working class."[58]

A secondary purpose of his book is,

> ...to examine important and central aspects of
> working class culture through the concrete study
> of one of its most revealing manifestations--

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[57]Paul Willis, <u>Learning to Labor</u>, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. vii.

[58]Ibid.

young non-academic, disaffected males
and their adaptation to work as a crucial and
privileged moment in the continuous regener-
ation of working class cultural forms in
relation to the most essential structure of
society--its working relations.[59]

Summary

In summary, no research could be found on Behavior

and Adjustment classes. Since those students in a Behavior

and Adjustment Class have been identified as having a

'behavior' exceptionality and thus demonstrating mal-

adaptive behavior, and since research findings support the

notion that maladaptive behavior is associated with school

failure, a review of the literature on the effects of

school failure is reported. Additionally, since the study

carried out was ethnographic in nature, a review of the

literature on ethnographies is given.

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[59] Ibid., p. 2.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines background information, the researcher's interest in ethnography, ethical considerations and methodology as related to this study.

Background of the Study

Special Education classes in Ontario are designed for the "exceptional pupil" as specified in the Education Act.[1] However, the term "exceptional" is truly an umbrella term inclusive of the following exceptional groupings:

1. behavioral exceptionalites which refer to social maladjustment and/or emotional disturbance;

2. communicational exceptionalities: autism; speech, hearing, and language impairments; and learning disabilities;

3. intellectual exceptionalities--giftedness and retardation;

4. physical exceptionalities: orthopaedic and/or physical handicaps; and, visual impairment;

5. multihandicapped which includes two or more of the foregoing exceptionalities.

The Ontario Ministry of Education encourages school boards to have

a continuum of service that would provide as full a range of placements as possible

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[1] The Education Act, (R.S.O.), Chapter 129, Subsection 1(1).

to meet the needs of exceptional pupils.
The primary focus in the development of
such a range of placements is to provide
an exceptional pupil with the strengths
and capabilities needed to return to a
regular classroom or achieve success in a
specified setting.[2]

The continuum of service ranges from assistance in

the regular classroom, to withdrawal on a part-time basis by

a special education teacher, to a specialized instructional

setting.

Some pupils may not have responded to traditional

methods of help; some students may need a "more highly

specialized setting" which permits greater student-teacher

interaction and more emphasis on individual needs.[3]

Some Ontario school boards are experimenting with a

specialized instructional setting--a self-contained class-

room--for students identified by an Identification, Placement

and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) as having a 'behavioral'

exceptionality.

The Identification, Placement and Review Committee

(I.P.R.C.) is a committee that each school board in Ontario

must establish in order to identify exceptional pupils. The

purpose of the I.P.R.C. is to determine whether or not a

child is exceptional; to place exceptional pupils in the

proper level of service, and to review the progress of

exceptional pupils at least once a year.

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[2] Special Education Handbook, p. 48.

[3] Ibid.

The parent, or principal upon written notification to the parent, makes the referral of a student to the I.P.R.C. Parents are encouraged to attend and participate in the I.P.R.C. meeting that concerns their child. Usually the principal presents the brief case study of the child-- describing the nature of the problem and the level of service deemed necessary. Pertinent information, such as the individual assessment, is part of the case study given to the I.P.R.C. Often other personnel from within the system or from an outside agency present reports to support or document the case study presented by the principal. Parents may also make presentations.

The identification of the exceptionality is the first decision of the I.P.R.C. The next decision involves the level of service. Level I service is the regular classroom with a modified program. Level II service is the resource withdrawal program and Level III service is a self-contained special education class or facility. All involved in the identification and placement are advised in writing almost immediately after the decision. Parents are requested to sign a form to indicate their agreement with the particular identification and placement of their child. (Should the parents not agree with the identification or placement, they may appeal the decision <u>in writing</u> within fifteen days to the Secretary of the school board. A statement outlining their

disagreement with the I.P.R.C. decision must be included.

Within thirty days, the board must appoint an Appeal Board to

review the decision of the I.P.R.C.).[4]

As the Special Education Handbook, 1984, states,

The opportunity for a specialized setting
allows for greater pupil-teacher interaction
and a greater focus on individual needs.[5]

In the reported study, observances were made in a

Behavior and Adjustment Class. Such a class is a Level III

service, a self-contained class, which serves exceptional

children identified by an I.P.R.C. as having a 'behavioral'

exceptionality.

This Study

Researcher's Interest in Ethnography

This writer became interested in ethnography while

carrying out a study as part of her doctoral course work at

Michigan State University. Having conducted a field study,

the researcher realized the benefits and insights that could

be gained using ethnographic methodology.

Additionally, because of the researcher's background

and interest in the social sciences and education, she

decided to carry out a qualitative study in an educational

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

setting.

In order to 'get a good handle' on a study, she decided to carry out a participant-observer study in a classroom which had a small number of students. Since the maximum number permitted by legislation in a Behavior and Adjustment Class is eight,[6] the researcher decided that in-depth information could be gained about many areas. In addition, because of the small class size, she felt that she might more easily obtain the perspective of the students and/or teacher, and learn the culture of the classroom.

Furthermore, during her nineteen years as educator, the researcher had noticed that the number of special education self-contained classes had increased. Because of her particular interests in school failure, student behavior, and special eduction, the researcher felt that a naturalistic field study of a Behavior and Adjustment Class might be significant for the school system.

Heshusius has pointed out that,

> Special Education has suffered from positi-
> vist indoctrination more than other disciplines.
> The children we serve need to be quantified and
> ranked outside of normality before they can
> even receive special attention.[7]

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[6]The Education Act, Regulation 262, Section 25(35).

[7]Lous Heshusius, "Pedagogy, Special Education, and the Lives of Young Children: A Critical and Futuristic Perspective," Journal of Education, Vol. 168, No. 3, (1986), p. 2.

In the last few years holistic thought has gained momentum. As Heshusius states, holistic thought

> sets forth a set of assumptions about the
> nature of reality and the nature of knowing
> that stress the interdependency of the whole
> and the apparent parts of any system or entity.[8]

Special education educators want to know _how_ children feel about school failure; _how_ they react; _how_ they feel about being in special education self-contained classes. Special education educators want to know _what_ happens in special education classes; _what_ teaching strategies are beneficial.

Heshusius reports that Manen contends that a primary task of an educator is to be "thoughtful" and an educator will act more thoughtfully if he knows "what the lived experience" of the child is. Heshusius queries, "How can one be thoughtful if one does not know how the students really perceive their lives?"[9]

It seemed to this writer only logical that, in order to truly understand what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment class, one needed to observe and participate in the life of that class; one needed to 'be' one of that class; one needed to 'experience' the class; one needed to interact with the people in the class.

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[8] Ibid., p. 29.

[9] Ibid.

Ethical Considerations

After deciding in the summer of 1987 to study a Behavior and Adjustment Class, the researcher met with the Superintendent of Education to explain the study and to seek his permission. Upon receiving a positive response, she spoke with the teacher of the class who enthusiastically endorsed the study. The teacher stated that she was welcome to visit the class at any time. The researcher then met with the principal to explain the general purpose of the study, and to ask his permission to carry out the study. Also, in order that she not 'upset' routines or disturb him, or events in the school; in order that she might be as inconspicuous as possible, she requested free access to the school and particularly the classroom. (Gaining free access seemed to be reasonable since the classroom has its own entrance at the rear of the school and quite a distance from the office. As a matter of fact, the classroom is the only one with an entrance directly to the outside. It would be possible for one to come and go quite easily). The principal consented verbally to the request.

Having received verbal permission from school authorities and determining that the study was feasible, this writer submitted her proposal to her dissertation committee and to the University Committee for Research in Human Subjects (UCRIHS). While awaiting approval for the study from UCRIHS, she decided to initiate pre-field study activities.

Richardson contends that initial field research activities might be done before the formal study begins in order "to gain personal acceptance."[10]

Pre-field study involved visits to the class to participate in some of the activities. These visits helped to establish rapport and when the researcher was able to formally commence the field study, she had the advantage of being accepted as a member of the group.

Upon receiving notification from UCRIHS that her proposal had been approved, she then met with the parent(s) or guardian of each of the boys as well as each of the boys and explained the research: its purpose, procedures, and duration of participation. A written informed consent signed by each of the boys' parents or guardian was obtained. (See APPENDIX A).

The study was then explained to the teacher's aide and school counsellor. Their written permission and the written permission of the Superintendent, principal and teacher (who had previously given verbal permission) were obtained. (See APPENDIX B and APPENDIX C).

Upon completion of the study, "ethical proofreading"

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[10]Stephen A. Richardson, "A Framework for Reporting Field-Relations Experiences," in Human Organization Research, edited by Richard N. Adams and Jack J. Preiss, (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1960), p. 27.

of the dissertation as suggested by Carole Gaar Johnson[11] was

conducted by the teacher of the Behavior and Adjustment

Class, as well as by the principal of the school in which the

Behavior and Adjustment Class is located.

Methodology

As mentioned, most of the data in this study were

gathered through the participant-observation methodology.

According to Gold, there are four basic roles that the

participant-observer may assume while doing field research:

Complete Participation--The true identity
of the complete participant in field research
is not known to those whom he observes. [Role
pretense is employed.]

Participant-as-Observer--Both field worker
and informant are aware that theirs is a
field relationship. [The fieldworker attempts
to be an 'insider'--an accepted and normal
member of the group.]

Observer-as-Participant--[This role] is used
in studies involving one-visit interviews.
It calls for relatively more formal observa-
tion than either informal observation or
participation of any kind. It also entails
less risk of "going native."

Complete Observer--The complete observer role
entirely removes the field worker from social
interaction with informants. Here a field-
worker attempts to observe people in ways
which make it unnecessary for them to take

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[11]Carole Gaar Johnson, "Risks in the Publication Fieldwork," in The Ethics of Social Research, edited by Robert F. Kidd, (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982).

him into account.[12]

Since this investigator wanted to interact with the members of the class and wanted to find out what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class from their point of view and since this researcher's presence was known, "Participant-as-Observer" was the role employed.

Participation in the setting took place during the day. The observations and casual conversations were then recorded at the end of each day. In addition, documents were used--both school documents and system documents--and, photographs taken. A review of the literature on participant-observation studies and on the effects of school failure was carried out using library research.

The researcher visited the class as often as possible, over a period of two and a half months during the school year. Most visits were usually 'spontaneous' with the researcher 'popping in' whenever she was able; some visits, however, were planned at the request of the children or teacher. Visits lasted from twenty minutes to a full day with most visits lasting a quarter of the day.

To reiterate, data sources were fieldnotes from participant-observation, documents, photographs, casual conversations, and library research.

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[12]Raymond Gold, "Roles in Field Observations," in Sociological Methods, A Sourcebook, edited by Norman K. Denzin, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 373-378.

1. <u>Fieldnotes</u>: At the end of each day, notes were written recording the visits to the class-room, meetings, field trips, and activities, in which the observer participated, and casual conversations (These were typed the following day.)

2. <u>Documents</u>: Confidential documents were obtained both from the school and from the Special Education Department. These documents included educational assessments, medical reports, behavior rating scales, report cards, and family history.

3. <u>Photographs</u>: These were obtained easily. They were useful for describing the setting and for capturing the many activities which were a part of the teaching-learning process.

4. <u>Casual Conversations</u>: These occurred at various times and with various people--the counsellor, the principal, the teacher's aide, the Superintendent of Education, the teacher, and parent(s) or guardian(s) of the boys.

5. <u>Library Research</u>: Research was carried out on symbolic interaction, the participant-observation methodology, ethnographies, the effects of school failure, and the 'behavior' exceptionality.

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Issues of Reliability and Validity

Two issues of concern in qualitative research are the reliability and validity of the data collected. Validity refers to the soundness of the data collected. A study is valid if it accurately describes what happened in the setting. Reliability is related to consistency. A study is reliable if, had someone else carried it out, he/she would have come to the same conclusions. According to Cusick, "If you have validity, you have reliability."[13]

According to Miles and Huberman, the researcher is the "measuring instrument."[14] Sieber concurs. She asserts that,

> The fieldworker is the measuring instrument,
> and the method of gathering information is
> to create a natural human relationship with
> one or more members of the group to be studied
> and to learn their culture by interacting with
> them, talking with them, and observing them.[15]

This researcher recognized this. She was able to gain the trust of the subjects and to establish rapport. She learned their culture by interacting and observing. To do so, she was, however, careful to follow the advice of numerous

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[13]Philip Cusick, Lecture Notes from EAD 951H Class, Field Research Methods In Education, (Mighigan State University, May 5, 1987).

[14]Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, Qualitative Data Analysis, (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1984), p. 46.

[15]Joan E. Sieber, "Ethical Dilemmas in Social Research," The Ethics of Social Research, edited by Robert F. Kidd, (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982), p. 1.

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ethnographic writers. Such advice included not repeating

tales or gossip and adopting "a policy of careful,

noncommittal neutrality with respect to questions which might

be asked me involving anything controversial."[16]

Homans lists the following six criteria that field

studies should meet:

1. Time--the more time an individual
    spends with a group, the more likely
    it is that he will obtain an accurate
    interpretation of the social meanings
    its members live by.

2. Place--the closer the observer works
    geographically to the people he studies,
    the more accurate should be his inter-
    pretations.

3. Social Circumstances--the more varied
    the status opportunities within which
    the observer can relate to his subjects,
    and the more varied the activities he
    witnesses, the more likely the observer's
    interpretations will be true.

4. Language--the more familiar the observer
    is with the language of his subjects,
    the more accurate should be his inter-
    pretations.

5. Intimacy--the greater degree of
    intimacy the observer achieves with
    his subjects, the more accurate his
    interpretations.

6. Consensus of Confirmation in the Con-
    text--the more the observer confirms the
    expressive meanings of the community,
    either directly or indirectly, the more

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[16]Robert K. Bain, "The Researcher's Role: A Case
Study," in Human Organization Research, p. 151.

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accurate will be his interpretations of
them.[17]

Acknowledging the criteria set out by Homans can help

to ensure reliability and validity. The researcher spent as

much time, as often as possible, with the group; she engaged

in numerous activities both in the classroom and outside of

the classroom. She learned the language of the subjects;

she tried to develop intimacy with the group by being an

equal, by being perceived as neutral and an 'insider' and as

belonging. Indeed, her participation began to be taken for

granted and that she was 'expected' to participate in

numerous activities lends weight to her belief that she was

viewed as an 'insider' in a special non-threatening role.

The researcher felt that her goal--to develop an under-

standing of what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class--

was achieved after about three months when the information

gathered became repetitive.

Palonsky proposes an additional criterion for good

ethnographic research--a variety of data gathering techniques

(triangulation).[18] The researcher was cognizant of this and,

as mentioned, used a variety of data gathering techniques:

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[17]Severyn T. Bruyn, The Human Perspective In
Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation,
(Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966),
pp. 181-183.

[18]Stuart B. Palonsky, 900 Shows a Year, A Look at
Teaching from a Teacher's Side of the Desk, (New York: Random
House, 1986), p. 195.

photographs, documents, casual conversations, in addition to participation and observation.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

As mentioned, the purpose of this study was to
describe and explain what occurs in a Behavior and
Adjustment Class. The study reports the activities and
interactions that took place in the classroom. Since the
activities and interactions take place in a particular
setting--usually the classroom--the researcher feels that
the setting needs to be described. In addition, each of
the individuals or actors[1] that makes up the group, reacts
based on his/her interactions and the interpretations of
what the situations mean to him/her. But one's perceptions
are based in part on one's history. The setting in which
the actors engage and the history which each then has, has
created his/her social reality.

In order to gain an understanding of what occurs in
a Behavior and Adjustment Class, the curriculum, the
teacher's goals and beliefs, and a typical day in the
Behavior and Adjustment Class are presented. The latter
also helps to elucidate interactions.

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[1] Pseudonyms have been used to ensure anonymity.

The Setting

The School

The school, Urban City School, is located in the
inner core of a small industrial city located in mid-Canada.
The school comprises ten self-contained classrooms--one of
which is the Behavior and Adjustment Class.

The Classroom

The classroom for the Behavior and Adjustment Class
is in the basement of Urban City School--a school which is
more than seventy years old. The classroom actually
consists of a number of very small rooms in a part of the
school known as the 'dungeon'. It is so named because in
order to reach the classroom (in actuality a number of small
rooms) from the office or other classrooms, one walks to the
basement of the building through a dark dingy narrow area
with low ceilings and storage areas. The classroom does
have its own entry at the rear of the school. Thus, one
side of the classroom leads to the playground. As men-
tioned, the classroom is really a series of very small
rooms--in all (see Figure 1). The "main" room is only 7
yards by 8 1/2 yards square. The one wall which has
bulletin boards neatly decorated, faces the playground.

The one bulletin board with a pink background, white
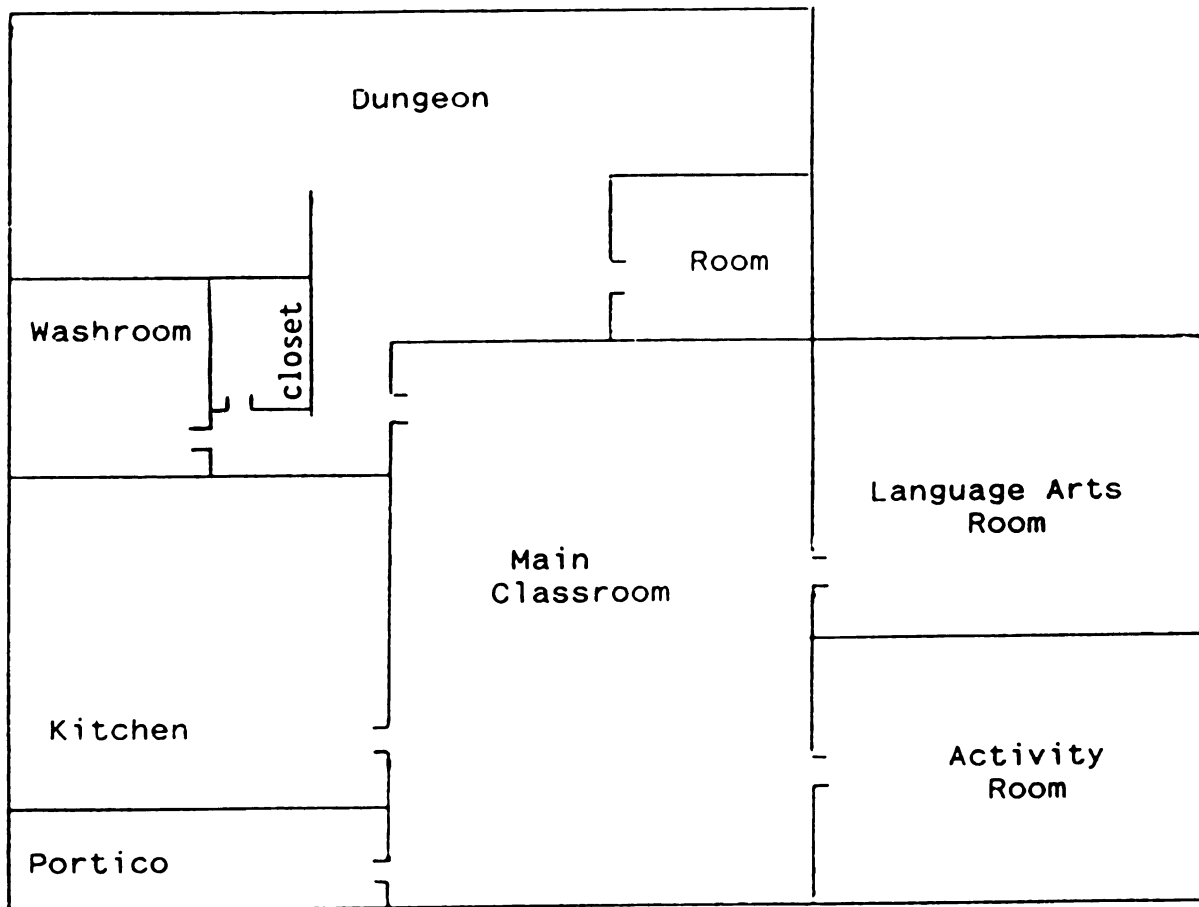border and cartoon character of Mickey Mouse dressed in

FIGURE 1   Classroom Layout

(not to scale)

black and red in gleeful animation is entitled "Magnificent Math" and refers to place value; next to that bulletin board is another with red "brick" background on which is a shooting star and the words "Welcome Back"; and to the right of that is a bulletin board with a laborer holding up a sign that says "Top Notch Work Ahead." The three bulletin boards are about the same width and take up the upper half of the wall.

Below the bulletin boards is a series of windows covered by beige curtains. Below the window is a radiator. Nestled in the south corner of the room between the door leading to the "Activity Room" and open shelves is a four drawer legal size filing cabinet. On top of the filing cabinet is a brown box and on top of that is a globe.

To the left of the door is another bulletin board. The background of this one is baby blue. It is entitled "Looking Good." A beautiful pink swan with black beak gracefully adorns this bulletin board and is adjacent to a sign that says "Person of the Week." Below two ribbons is a person's name.

To the front of this bulletin board sits the teacher's desk. On it are the usual paraphernalia--books, kleenex, three-hole punch, and paper.

To the left is a door leading to the "Language Arts Room," a room even smaller than the main room. To the left of the door is a bulletin board used for science. In front

of the bulletin board are audio-visual materials: a film-
strip machine, a tape recorder and an overhead. The latter
is on a cart.

Not only do the audio-visual materials face the
science bulletin board, they are also positioned in front of
the blackboard which extends the length of the classroom.
Above the blackboard are two alphabets: one is print script
--white on dark green; the other is cursive script--yellow
on light green. Above each of the letters is a colorful
picture. For example, above the 'Ff' is a picture of a fox.
Between the two alphabets, near the centre of the wall, are
the numerals from 1 to 10; to the right of the numerals is
a clock.

To the left of the blackboard on the wall, is found
the Canadian flag with its two stripes of red on either side
of the red maple leaf which is on a white background.

Another doorway is found to the left of the
blackboard; and to the left of that is found a bulletin
board employed for social studies. It is meticulously put
up as are all of the other bulletin boards. Below the
bulletin board is found a variety of materials--games, lego
blocks, books, and rock art. The latter has been labeled by
each of the boys and sits proudly atop the shelf.

To the left of this bulletin board is yet another
door leading to a room in which there are a stove and

fridge, a dryer and washer and a sink--all of which appear to have seen little use. A bulletin board entitled "Nutrition" is found on the far side of this room.

And there is one more door, a fifth door, from the "main" classroom. It leads to a small portico in which are hangers for the children's coats, and a desk which is used occasionally when a child needs "time-out." A door leads from the portico to the outside. Thus the small "main" classroom has five doors leading to other rooms. From the description, one can see that there are numerous bulletin boards brightly and meticulously decorated--some with children's work and some related to the themes which are being investigated or studied by the students.

At the back of the room is a light brown, old, long table with one matching chair and six other chairs. On the table is a puzzle with its many pieces set out and with the picture of the puzzle in full view.

Directly in front of the teacher's desk is a desk at which the teacher's aide sits when observing or when grading assignments. In front of the aide's desk, in semi-circle formation and with about a one foot distance between each, are the desks of the boys. The seats are attached to the desk and the tops lift up.

The floor is tiled in a bleak yellow shade. As mentioned, there are small rooms off of the "main"

classroom. An "Activity Room" houses two Apple computers, one long table and chairs, and a desk. A bulletin board can be found in this room also. In the "Language Arts Room" which is not only off of the "main" classroom, but is also adjacent to the "Activity Room" is another long table. A closet in the room houses art materials as do the numerous shelves. Blue curtains cover the window that faces the south side of the playground.

The Actors

Mickey

Mickey was first assessed by the school when he was approximately seven and one half years of age. At that time he was experiencing difficulties in all areas of the grade one program. When tested, it was found that he lost "his train of thought" when asked to respond to questions "outside his experiences." Although he demonstrated a short attention span, he was persistent. Mickey's intellectual functioning was described as below average when the full scale score of an individual test of mental ability, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-R), was administered. A significant difference was found between Mickey's verbal and performance scores suggesting a learning disability. It was, therefore, reported by the tester that

Mickey be considered for placement in a Learning Disabili-
ties Class. However, this recommendation was not acted upon
and Mickey remained in a grade one class.

Mickey's report card during his second year in grade
one indicated that Mickey was cooperative, demonstrated
initiative, courtesy, consideration for others, industry,
respect for others, thoroughness in his work and self-
confidence. His grades were mostly A's except for two B's.
According to the teacher's report, Mickey "was achieving
quite well until Easter time," at which time "he seemed to
reach his maximum learning point." He missed a week of
school at this time because of a bad cough, sore throat, and
fever. When he returned, he appeared to be far behind and
required one-to-one instruction.

A year and a half later, when Mickey had just turned
nine years old and was in grade two at a new school, a new
referral for educational assessment was made. The reason
for the referral was that Mickey was experiencing great dif-
ficulty with the academic skills. Testing behavior indi-
cated that "Mickey appeared to be well motivated" and he
applied himself to the tasks.

Mickey's profile of overall intellectual function-
ing was again within the 'Low Average' range on both the
Verbal and Performance sections of the WISC-R. It was
the recommendation of the report that Mickey continue in the

regular stream with support from the Special Education Resource teacher.

A report from the next year's teacher stated that Mickey was a polite, cooperative boy. She stated, however, that Mickey could not read directions nor anything that he had copied from the board. The Special Education Resource teacher concurred. She stated that he put "forth a good effort despite the frustration he has experienced with his school work."

A request for identification and placement of Mickey was again submitted. Mickey was identified as a slow learner (an 'Intellectual' exceptionality) and placed in a Primary Special Education Class. Comments related to Mickey's social growth and behavior by the teacher of this class were that he seldom played with the children in the room; he preferred to play with children who were older; he tended to be bossy; he often interfered when he was not involved in an incident; and, he did not always tell the truth.

At the end of the school year when Mickey's placement was reviewed, it was again recommended that Mickey be placed in a Learning Disabilities class. Thus, at the age of ten, Mickey travelled to a new class, at a 'new' school. Within two months of his new placement, Mickey was suspended for two days pursuant to Section 22 of the

Education Act--"Conduct injurious to the well-being of others." Behavior appeared to worsen after the suspension. Mickey defaced the school desks, as well as his own property; he broke pencils and he crumpled unfinished work sheets. He was also very upset and generally negative about himself, saying that he was 'dumb', 'stupid', etc.. Yard duty teachers complained about Mickey's poor behavior.

Mickey, whose health had been previously reported as good, began to have upset stomachs and headaches. He began to experience nightmares and to dread going to school. Mickey's mother took him to a physician who carried out a complete history and physical on him to rule out any organic pathology.

By May, 1986, Mickey's behavior had deteriorated so much so that an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) decided that he should be placed in a day treatment setting for students with emotional disturbances. Mickey was admitted the following September. Mickey remained in the day setting for one school year after which time it was felt that he was ready to be re-integrated into the school setting. The first step was the Behavior and Adjustment Class in which the researcher first met Mickey in September, 1987.

During the study, the researcher learned that Mickey had been to eight schools. Additionally, she learned that

Mickey's achievement in reading is three years below his chronological peers; his achievement in math is two years behind his chronological peers.

George

George is a tall, chubby eleven year old of native ancestry. He was first referred for an educational assessment when he was six years, seven months old, because he did not seem to show appropriate emotional reactions; he was aggressive at play and showed little remorse for wrongful acts. In addition, his attention span in class was extremely short; he had difficulty expressing verbally what he was thinking; and he showed little pride in his work.

Observations of testing behavior at the time state that George was friendly and talkative during the testing sessions. He seemed to have a very short attention span. George remained in the mainstream but was referred a second time for an educational assessment when he was nine years old because he was experiencing great difficulty with the grade two program, even though he had repeated grade one. According to the diagnostician's report, George was quiet, yet cooperative during the testing. He spoke only when asked a direct question. He seemed to exhibit poor attending skills.

The tester further reported that, when George

experienced difficulty, he worked more and more slowly and finally would give up by putting his head on the desk.

George's behavior in the school setting was considered severely over-reactive. George was severely distractible, domineering and aggressive.

Results of an individual test of mental ability indicated that George's intellectual functioning was below average. George's language development, also, was much below average.

The report stated that George had received both Resource Withdrawal assistance and counselling for his aggressive and defiant behaviors. Because of George's great difficulties with the academic work in his class and because of aggressive and over-reactive behavior in both the classroom and schoolyard, an alternative educational program was recommended. George was referred to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) meeting at which it was felt that the best placement for George would be in a Behavior and Adjustment Class.

Upon examining George's history further, it was learned that George's mother and a sister had died in a fire when George was five years old, and that he lived with his grandparents. The report also stated that the inappropriate behaviors appeared to be a result of the trauma of losing his family.

The report of the Special Education resource teacher states that repeating grade one "did not appear to provide him with more skills." In actuality, he "failed" grade one again and was transferred to grade two where he continued to struggle with the program.

The health report stated that George appeared to have normal vision and hearing. It did state that he suffered from frequent colds and coughs.

George's placement in the Behavior and Adjustment Class began in September, 1986. Thus, at the beginning of this study, George had been in the class for almost one and a half years.

During the study, the researcher learned that George had been to four schools and that his achievement level in reading and math are three years below his chronological peers.

John

The first indication in John's file that he had behavioral problems was a letter sent by a doctor to the Coordinator of Special Education when John was not yet six years old, stating that John was a behaviorally disordered child in need of a highly structured management program. The report indicated that John came from a home situation where alcoholism had disrupted normal family relationships.

The doctor referred John to a day treatment program because he was easily distractible and had poor concentration in school, and he did not respond to discipline at home. According to a report made approximately nine months later, John's behavior had improved. He was not as loud but tended to pout more. In order to further enhance John's self-image and improve his social skills, it was recommended that John be involved in the summer program and return in the fall to the treatment centre.

At this point, John was assessed by the school board. The Bristol Social-Adjustment Guide (BSAG) rating indicated that John's behaviors were over-reactive. The tester felt that these occurred because of frustration. John was found to have average to above-average intellectual functioning. A health report indicated that his general health was good.

Facts included in John's file are that, at this time, there had been some traumas in his life. His grandmother had recently died; his father had returned to the home and married his mother.

During the study, the researcher learned that the family unit is frequently in transition. The mother works shift work to support the family. She learned also, that John had been to four different schools and that his academic achievement in math and reading were above that of

his chronological peers.

A review of John's placement at the end of the school year when he was eight, recommended placement in a Behavior and Adjustment Class where he is presently.

The latest educational assessment confirmed earlier results of average to above-average intellectual function-ing. Testing observations showed John to be pleasant and cooperative during the testing. He seemed to enjoy a challenge and was able to respond quickly.

Ken

Ken is eleven and a half years old, of native ancestry and one of three children. He lives with both parents on an Indian reserve. Home conditions appear to be poor.

Ken's behavior first appeared to cause a problem when he was in grade one which he was repeating. In grade two, when he was nine years old, he was referred for edu-cational testing because he disturbed the teacher and his classmates with inappropriate behavior and because of academic difficulties.

The individual ability test indicated that he had average ability; his performance skills were stronger than his verbal skills; and auditory attention and memory were significantly below average for his age. The diagnostician

observed that during testing, Ken was very quiet and did not engage in conversation.

Interventions attempted after the assessment included group counselling to teach Ken how to better control his aggressive behavior and to learn coping skills in social situations; counselling by a behavioral counsellor, and use of role playing by the classroom teacher.

An Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) meeting was held a year later because the aggressive behaviors and other problems had increased. Indeed, Ken had only recently received a three day suspension. In addition, the principal reported that several parents had called stating that they would transfer their children to other schools unless something were done. The I.P.R.C. decided that placement should be in the Behavior and Adjustment Class. Thus Ken began his second year in the Special Education classroom this past September. During the study, this investigator learned that Ken had been to three different schools; that his achievement in reading and math are at least two years below that of his chronological peers.

Steve

Steve is eleven years old and of slight build for his age. Steve was first referred for educational testing

when he was six years, two months. At that time he
was in kindergarten but was referred for testing because,
according to the classroom teacher, he was not functioning
at the kindergarten level. He had difficulty following
simple directions; he had a short attention span; he
"lived in a world of his own"; and he had poor speech.
The referral for testing had information that stated that
Steve's father felt that Steve had emotional problems due
to his early childhood negative experiences.

The psychometrician reported that Steve appeared
apprehensive, withdrawn and distractible during the in-
dividual test of ability. The tester noted that Steve
"directed a considerable amount of energy (building and
smashing) toward the pieces used in the Block Design sub-
test" (of the WISC-R). He appeared extremely tired near the
end of the first afternoon of testing, resulting in poor and
inconsistent effort. This was brought to light in the
second session when he was capable of producing much more
acceptable work. The diagnostician stated that Steve's
demonstrated behavior (distractibility, rocking, and dis-
plays of aggression) seemed to suggest evidence of frustra-
tion. Furthermore, it was the diagnostician's belief that
Steve had developed discouragement and an inconsistent
learning style because of repeated failure and difficulty of
the work with which he had to cope.

The reports indicate that Steve's health was normal; his intellectual functioning was at average range or near to low average (with caution suggested in accepting the results because of Steve's behavior during the testing); his expressive and receptive language was normal; and, his speech was often slurred and difficult to understand.

Steve repeated kindergarten; however, according to his file, he experienced considerable difficulty even in his second year of kindergarten. Steve was "transferred" to grade one.

Steve was retested less than six months later when he was about seven and a half years old. The diagnostician reported that Steve appeared to be a rather happy-go-lucky child with little achievement drive and an aversion to the more academic tasks. The results of the testing indicated that Steve was functioning intellectually well within the average range, although academically he was two grades below his expected achievement level. The recommendation was that Steve receive much review and drill of the core skill subjects so that he gain mastery and have successful experiences which might lead to a desire to succeed.

At an I.P.R.C. meeting, it was decided that Steve attend the Special Education Class for students identified as being a slow learner (an 'Intellectual' exceptionality).

During Steve's first year in the class, the teacher reported that Steve had made very little academic progress. She also reported that Steve tended to be a loner, had mood swings and could be cruel to other children. She recommended a Behavior and Adjustment Class. The Committee did not agree since the members felt that behavior counselling should be first attempted.

Steve remained in the Primary Special Education Class and according to the teacher made good academic and social progress. When the I.P.R.C. met at the end of that school year, it recommended placement in a Learning Disabilities Class.

Within two months of his new placement, however, a request was submitted for review of his placement because of his disruptive behavior.

A new educational assessment was carried out. This time, intellectual functioning appeared to be at the low-average to borderline level. The tester suggested that his slow academic progress was strongly affected by his attentional difficulties, his low motivation, and his personal/ social behavioral tendencies. He felt that Steve's inconsistent performances suggested that, when he applied himself fully to a task, he was capable of near average work. A referral was made to the I.P.R.C. for Steve to be placed in a day treatment setting to assist Steve with his

personal/social behavior problems. Steve was admitted to
the day treatment school when he was nine and a half years
old. After one and a half years, it was recommended that he
be returned to the regular school system. This occurred
this past September.

During the study the researcher learned that Steve
had been to six schools; and, his reading and math achieve-
ment levels are at least three years below that of his
chronological peers.

Jack

Jack came to the Behavior and Adjustment Class about
three weeks after the formal commencement of the study. For
a year and a half prior to this placement, he appeared to
have progressed well in a Learning Disabilities Class. His
behavior appeared satisfactory until two months prior to
this placement when he had presented himself as a behavior
problem. A request came from the principal and the parent
that his placement in the Learning Disabilities Class be
reviewed. At an Identification, Placement, and Review
Committee meeting, it was decided that Jack be placed in the
Behavior and Adjustment Class.

A review of Jack's history reveals that Jack was
first referred for testing because of misbehavior when he
was in grade one. He was seven and a half years old.

The educational assessment report indicates that Jack's test responses seemed to suggest that Jack doesn't always understand or comprehend the meaning of orally presented information. Outside noises and visual stimuli present in the testing room distracted his attention. He had a tendency to give up and move on to the next item with little or no apparent effort. The report states that when his way is blocked, he tended to behave out of anger and frustration. Socially, Jack was found to be extremely friendly, polite, courteous, and considerate. His intellectual functioning was found to be at an average level. Jack's language development was found to be normal.

Jack was then referred to an I.P.R.C. when he was nine years old and in grade two because of misbehavior. He was placed in a Behavior and Adjustment Class and remained there for two years. At the end of the two years, an I.P.R.C. identified him as Learning Disabled (a 'Communication' exceptionality) and he was placed in a Learning Disabilities Class.

During the study, it was learned that Jack had been to four different schools; that his achievement level in reading and math are at least two years below his chronological peers.

Looking at Jack's school history, it was found that Jack had repeated grade one, passed on to grade two only to

experience academic failure again.

During the study, this researcher learned that Jack's health appeared normal although he does have allergies to cats, dogs, feathers, housedust, grass and pollen. She learned also that Jack lives with his mom and an older brother. Interventions attempted to improve his behavior included personal counselling by a Student and Family Counsellor and behavioral counselling by the Behavioral Consultant.

The Teacher's Aide

The teacher's aide, Rose Mason, is approximately forty years of age. She has blonde hair and is of medium height and build.

Although she has had no previous training working with children who have been identified as having a 'behavioral' exceptionality, she is a mother and does have three children, one of whom had been in a Special Education class. Prior to her engagement in this position, she had been a lunch supervisor in a school and a parent volunteer. They were these qualifications, as well as her excellent references, her desire to assist in a Behavior and Adjustment Class, and her apparent empathy that "got her the job."

TABLE 1   Summary of School Characteristics Related to the Students

Students	Expected Grade Level Achievement	Present Grade Level Achievement		I.Q.	Grades Repeated	No. of Schools Attended	Age at Which First Referred For Testing	Reason for Referral
		Reading	Math					
Mickey	7	4	5	below average	gr. 1	8	7.5	academic difficulties
George	6	3	3	below average	gr. 1 (twice) transferred to gr. 2 (second time)	4	6.5	poor behavior
John	5	6	6	average to above average	none	4	5.5	poor behavior
Ken	6	4	4	average	gr. 1	3	9.0	poor behavior/ academic difficulties
Steve	6	3	3	average	kindergarten (twice) transferred to gr. 1 (second time)	6	6.1	academic difficulties
Jack	7	5	5	average	gr. 1 gr. 2	4	7.5	poor behavior

TABLE 2   Summary of Personal Characteristics of the Students

Students	Sex	Present Age	Family	Socio-Economic Class	Health	Self-Concept	Home Conditions
Mickey	m	12	traditional	middle	normal	poor	not known
George	m	11	lives with grandparents	low	normal vision & hearing; frequent colds & coughs	poor	poor
John	m	10	single-parent (mother)	low	normal	poor	poor
Ken	m	11	traditional	low	normal	poor	poor
Steve	m	11	single-parent (father)	low	normal	poor	poor
Jack	m	12	single-parent (mother)	low	good except for allergies	poor	poor

The Teacher

Mr. P. is approximately twenty-four years of age. In addition to a Bachelor of Education degree, and Parts I and II of the Special Education Qualifications, he has some courses toward a Bachelor of Social Work degree.

He is a first year teacher having only substituted in various classrooms previously. He holds no special training or qualifications in working with children who have been identified as having a 'behavioral' exceptionality. He was hired as teacher for the Behavior and Adjustment Class because of his enthusiasm, his desire for this position, and the fact that no experienced teacher applied for the position.

It is interesting to note that the teacher's interests include physical fitness, nutrition, and a love of children's literature.

The Curriculum

Introduction

The curriculum is the set of school experiences that the child has. The curriculum of the Behavior and Adjustment Class is geared towards helping to develop the child's interpersonal relationships. It attempts to do this by building self-esteem; by building self-confidence; by

building a sense of responsibility; and by providing successes.

The curriculum in the Behavior and Adjustment Class is influenced by the teacher's views of the goals of education, his beliefs, and his interactions.

Predominant themes that emerged in the study were the active engagement in learning; use of a variety of control techniques; and ongoing evaluation and modifications.

Active Engagement in Learning

The data indicate that a predominant theme of the study is the active engagement in activities. Many examples of this can be enumerated.

On a visit to the site on Halloween before the commencement of formal field study, the boys carved faces on pumpkins, cooked the seeds, and bobbed for apples.

Upon first entering the site, the students were observed to be engrossed in putting together a puzzle.

On one occasion after having a story read to them, the boys were asked to "act out" various scenes. They were then introduced to the term "tableau" and asked to perform a tableau while the others guessed what each was doing. One such tableau acted out by Jack was of an old lady

eating spaghetti. (01-12-88)

The teacher then explained that a story had a
series of events and asked the students to put together a
series of tableaus depicting the story which he had read to
them.

On the following two days the boys painted a mural
to depict a story read to them. The following is found in
the fieldnotes:

> The teacher tells the boys, "Today we'll
> paint the background for our story." He
> asks the boys what color the background
> should be painted. "Well, the sky is blue
> and the grass is green," remarks one of
> the students. "Fine," replies the teacher.
> "In every picture, the ground and sky meet.
> We need to paint all the paper. When you
> do, use wide sweeps with your brushes."
> When the background is painted, the teacher
> tells the boys that they'll let it dry,
> but will paint the story the following
> day. (01-12-88)

> The teacher asks the boys to briefly re-
> tell the story. They do. Each then
> indicates the scene he would like to
> paint and paints it. (01-13-88)

Active engagement in learning was evident in all
subjects. The following math review activity is record-
ed in fieldnotes:

> On the board are taped actual red geometric
> shapes--a prism, cylinder, sphere, pyramid,
> cone; on the board are also papers on which
> are written definitions of the various
> shapes. The teacher says, "I would like you
> to look carefully at the shapes and name the
> first ones. When you are able to name the

figure, put up your hand." George puts up his
hand, and then Ken, Mickey and John raise theirs.
"Ken, can you tell me the name of the first shape?"
Ken says, "It's a prism." "Good," the teacher
replies. "Here is the word 'prism'. Put it
beside the figure."

The teacher goes through each shape in like
manner...Each boy has a turn coming up to the
board...When all shapes and definitions are
matched, the teacher gives each of the boys
a sheet on which he is to match definitions
and shapes. (01-18-88)

On one occasion, while studying geometry, the boys

were given pressboard and pins and made their own geo-

boards. They were then allowed to make their own geo-

metric designs using elastics. On another occasion, using

straws and plasticine, each boy made three-dimensional

shapes.

The following activity is recorded in fieldnotes:

The teacher tells the students that they are
going to classify various objects. He
puts three yellow hoola hoops at the front
of the class and asks the boys to come up
quietly...Mr. P. puts only red objects inside
one hoola hoop and only yellow objects inside
another. He then asks how the objects are
grouped...Ken says, "By color."

The teacher puts only black objects in the
third hoop...

Having classified these objects, the teacher
asks everyone to return to his desk whereupon
the teacher gives each a plate with ju-jubes
(candies).

One student receives all red ju-jubes; two
students receive a mixture of red, green and
yellow; another--some yellow and green;
and two receive yellow and red. The students
are then asked to complete a sheet on which
they are to answer questions and color in the

number of ju-jubes each has. (02-29-88)

To develop body awareness and increase self-esteem, the teacher had the students lie on the floor. Another student traced the outline of the student. Each student then cut out two outlines. He was then allowed to fill in the face and paint the body of his "shadow." (01-14-88)

Other activities that actively engaged the students in learning were the making of puppets and putting on a puppet show; creating marionettes and writing a script; cooking, baking, making crafts; constructing sculptures and geometric shapes; videotaping; and participating in simulations, physical fitness, and field trips.

During a unit on nutrition and after having visited a grocery store, egg carton worms—a 'Go Worm', a 'Grow Worm', and a 'Glow Worm'—were constructed. Tying the visit to the grocery store to making change, a store is set up in the Activity Room. The following vignette is related:

> I arrive this mild winter day in the
> classroom to find Mickey and George
> counting "money" (play money) in the
> classroom. On their desks are games.
> The teacher, the aide, and the other
> boys are in the Language Arts Room.
> The teacher is the storekeeper; but,
> upon seeing me, he asks, "Do you mind
> being the storekeeper?" On the other
> side of the counter is Jack calculating
> the change that he'll receive when he
> pays the storekeeper for his game.
> I soon learn that the boys have so much

money and are able to buy the various
objects on the shelves in the store which
is located in the adjacent Activity Room.

After selecting an item, each boy approaches
the counter and pays for the item. Before he
does so, he calculates the change he will
receive when he pays. There is a bustle of
activity; two or three boys try to pay for
something at one time. The teacher says,
"Remember, one customer at a time pays."
(02-25-88)

Physical Fitness

The curriculum includes an emphasis on physical

fitness. There are at least thirty minutes of physical

fitness every day. Physical fitness includes wrestling,

floor hockey, ice hockey, skiing, soccer and bowling, and

a physical fitness training program.

At the beginning of the second semester, a kinesio-

logist came to a meeting for parents and explained a pro-

gram that he was overseeing. It involved having the boys

attend the fitness lab at the local university to find

their current level of physical fitness and then regular

training at the school by the teacher with scheduled visits

to the lab. The program was a four month program.

Simulations

The group actively engaged in simulations. One

simulation in which students needed to decide the best lo-

cation for a new incinerator involved numerous activities.

Firstly, some students and the researcher painted the background on the chalkboard while other students and the teacher cut out buildings to put on the background. During the five sessions, the aide was mayor, the boys and teacher were aldermen; this researcher was a speaker for one of the five sessions as were the principal, the superintendent, and other visitors. The aldermen asked questions of the various speakers and decided on the best location for the incinerator. The simulation was video-taped respectively by the researcher and by various students in the class. As an offshoot of this simulation, the group visited City Hall and spoke with an alderman.

During another simulation, the members of the class worked in pairs. The simulation, 'Communicate', involved deciding on designs for shapes, cutting them out, and sitting back-to-back. One person arranged a pattern with the various shapes. He/she then communicated that pattern to the other person who could not ask questions but had to arrange a similar design. The roles were then reversed. The objectives of the simulation were to develop the ability to communicate, the ability to follow instructions, the ability to work cooperatively, and the ability to problem solve.

Field Trips

A field trip is a visit to another location. An intricate part of the curriculum is field trips. When studying nutrition or giving change, the students visited a grocery store.

The students trained at a physical fitness lab; they bowled each month; they downhill skiied and ice skated.

The group visited a farm on two occasions; they attended court; they visited the museum and the art gallery; they travelled to see a puppet play; they visited City Hall; they visited a shopping mall to see an animal display.

Special Events

Once a month is 'Hot Dog Day'. The students in the Behavior and Adjustment Class are responsible for pur-chasing the hot dogs, buns, and juice; cooking the hot dogs; making the popcorn; taking orders; organizing the orders; ensuring that each class receives its order.

'Zany Day' was a special event. Actually, it was Christmas in February. The group pulled out the Christmas tree one day, made decorations for the tree and room, listened to and sang Christmas carols, baked Christmas cookies, strung popcorn, and made Christmas gifts. The latter were made of plaster and were then painted.

Various Control Techniques

Control techniques employed include turn-taking; use of isolation; use of language and voice; use of "ignore"; use of suspension/consequence; use of positive reinforcement; and teacher attention.

Turn-taking was often evident during transitional periods--changes from one activity to another. For example, at the end of the morning, each child was called one by one to get his lunch. When the first child had gotten his lunch, another child was allowed to get his. This occurred until all had their lunches.

When students were dismissed at recess, they were dismissed one by one. When students moved from the main classroom to the Activity Room or Language Arts Room, their names were called one by one.

Depending on the degree of misbehavior, isolation was another means of control. If a student refused to participate in a particular activity or if he disturbed the class by his misbehavior, he was either removed to one of the other areas that belonged to the classroom or his desk was physically removed from the semi-circle.

One cold wintry morning, the researcher arrived to find Steve in the hall sitting at a desk outside the principal's office; George isolated in one of the small rooms

off the main classroom; Mickey in his desk but at the back
of the classroom and facing the other way. The reason for
the isolation was later revealed. Steve and Mickey had
refused to work; George had yelled out a barrage of swear
words at the teacher's aide during a school assembly and
had to be removed and isolated with the assistance of the
vice-principal. (02-17-88)

Sometimes, language alone was used to control.
During one activity, for example, one of the boys began
making sounds. The teacher said to the other boys almost
immediately, "Good behaving, Ken! Good behaving, John!
Good behaving, George! Good behaving, Mickey!" Immediate-
ly Steve stopped making the noises. (01-13-88)

When the teacher asked a question, and a student
blurted out the answer, the teacher responded something
like: "When you have something to say, please raise your
hand," or to the student who raised his hand he might say,
"I'm glad to see you raise your hand when you have a
question."

The teacher used his voice effectively. The fol-
lowing incident illustrates this:

>   John says, "But he's got my joke book."
>   The teacher walks over to Ken and calmly
>   says, "Please give me the joke book."
>   Ken does. He returns John's joke book
>   to him and Ken's pencil to him. (01-22-88)

Suspension was another control method employed. On

occasion, a boy was sent home for making excessive noises, using foul language, and refusing to do his work.

'Ignore' was another method of control. The following is one example reported:

> As the simulation is viewed, the boys
> laugh and make comments. John rocks
> back and forth on his chair and makes
> motions as though he'll hit Mickey.
> The teacher says nothing; the aide says
> nothing; the other boys say nothing; I
> say nothing. We all ignore. (01-21-88)

An example of consequence follows:

> The boys were not allowed to view a film.
> The teacher had told the boys that if
> they "acted out," they would not see the
> film and so he felt it necessary to carry
> out his "threat." (01-22-88)

Positive reinforcement was a control technique. On some occasions tokens alone were used; on other occasions, tokens were used with language.

Evaluation and Modifications

Another theme that emerged from the study was the teacher's constant evaluation of the program and what was occurring, and the teacher's subsequent efforts at making changes that he viewed as necessary. For example, on one occasion, the teacher had thought that he might convert a closet into an isolation booth. Upon returning the following day, the researcher was told by the teacher how after

thinking about it, the idea was "stupid." "What if a boy has matches or has a sharp object and cuts himself?" he remarked. (01-12-88). He felt that having a teacher's aide in the morning facilitated his control of the class. The problem seemed to be in the afternoon when no aide was present. He evaluated the pros and cons and decided that the teacher's aide could be of assistance in supervision and for providing the necessary assistance in the after-noon. The teacher presented the case for the necessity of a full-time teacher's aide to the principal who in turn discussed the matter with the Superintendent of Education who agreed and gave approval.

On another occasion, noting that the time during which the boys seemed to misbehave the most was outside during the noon hour, the teacher again discussed the matter with the principal. The teacher requested that the school hours for the students in the Behavior and Adjust-ment Class be changed to permit a shorter lunch period and earlier school dismissal. The dismissal time was changed from 3:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. This permitted a shorter lunch period--from seventy minutes to thirty minutes. The teacher's rationale for this was that much misbehavior occurred during the lunch time when the students had less to do and did not know how to amuse themselves. The school hours for the Behavior and Adjustment Class were changed

and according to the teacher's aide who supervised the children on the playground, there were fewer complaints by other children and fewer incidents of misbehavior. Both the principal and teacher noted this also.

When the use of foul language increased and the ignore technique seemed to be of no avail, the teacher decided to institute a 'Constitution'. After three warnings for swearing, a student received a suspension. After following through on this and a number of suspensions occurring, the swearing decreased and became almost nonexistent.

The teacher often evaluated what was going on in the class, too. An example of this is found in fieldnotes:

> The teacher says that he is really concerned about Steve. He says that he has gone over in his mind how he or the program is failing Steve or could it be that Steve has a hearing problem or a learning problem? (01-26-88)

The teacher then asked the nurse to check Steve's hearing; he asked the Speech-Language Pathologist to assess Steve's language. Upon being told that both were normal, he spoke with Steve to ask him if he (the teacher) could change anything he was doing. Steve said that he sometimes found the teacher's words "too hard" or he often didn't understand instructions. The teacher from then on, made sure that Steve understood the directions--he asked Steve to explain to him or the aide what the instructions were.

The teacher constantly evaluated the activities which occurred in the classroom as well as the events of the day.

For example, the class had a 'Hot Dog Day' to raise money for various field trips. When the researcher arrived one morning, everyone was busy--either making popcorn, making hot dogs, or counting the drinks. The teacher commented to the researcher:

> As far as written work, it was a lost
> morning. I had to throw my day plan
> out the window, but the kids did learn
> --each had responsibilities. They had
> to count everything, organize, and work
> as a team. (01-15-88)

Evaluation of the students and their work employs "growth schemes"--matrices to show where the child is at one time and how far he has progressed. Evaluation of the program occurs through interaction--interaction between the aide and teacher, the teacher and students, and the teacher and principal.

The Teacher's Goals

One important educational goal, the teacher be-lieves, should be the fostering of students' abilities to work harmoniously, skillfully, and productively with their fellow human beings. He believes that this can be achieved by the development of human relations' skills. These

include such skills as listening, expressing oneself clearly, being in touch with one's feelings, as well as being aware of others' feelings and thoughts.

The teacher believes that a second educational goal should be the development of skills needed to survive in a complex world. Primary among these are the skills of conflict-resolution, collaborative decision-making, and working effectively in diverse groups. Situations should be presented to the students in which they can discuss possible solutions to issues. In addition, students should be involved in decision-making in the classroom, e.g. possible issues to be researched and discussed, objectives to be achieved.

Since leisure will soon be possible for most people, the teacher believes that one important educational goal is the preparation of people for this new dimension of life. How? In addition to decision-making, problem-solving and critical thinking should be encouraged. There should also be more stress on leisure-time activities. Interests and skills in cooking, knitting, sewing, pot-tery, swimming, bowling, cross-country and downhill skiing could be developed.

The teacher believes that there should be greater emphasis on education of the body, of the emotions, and of the spirit. This can be accomplished by paying more

attention to physical fitness and stressing such activities as art and music which lead themselves readily to the development of aesthetic awareness. The teacher also believes that arts and crafts are therapeutic--that the students enjoy them and find them relaxing.

One of the greatest faults of conventional schools, the teacher believes, is that, by fostering a dichotomy between "educational" and "non-educational" situations, they have discouraged students from seeing the whole world and its encounters as the arena in which learning can occur. Thus, an important educational goal should be the fostering of a view of the school as essentially inter-dependent with society. All experiences should be seen as opportunities from which to learn. This might be better accomplished if audio-visual materials, newspapers, and discussions were common place in the classroom and if matters concerning human relations, homemaking, traffic safety, nutrition, manual training, constructive approaches, and family life--matters relevant to our everyday world--were a large part of the curricula. Content, defined as the sum of experiences needed to bring about desirable behavioral changes, will make one useful to one's self and to one's culture.

The teacher believes that the learner should become a resource. Projects undertaken by schools that seek to

teach the future should more frequently develop content
(experiences) that involves the learner as a resource in
the creation of the future. Curricula should involve the
engagement of students in socially useful activities such
as planting trees, shovelling snow, cleaning up litter in
public parks and grounds, learning to weed the parks, help-
ing to dispose of debris on our beaches, and helping to
care for the school area. These activities need to be done
in small groups over a sustained period of time, and with
community understanding and cooperation. Implicit in the
'student-as-a-resource' concept is the idea of the 'com-
munity-as-a-resource', a teaching aid of vitality, an
extensive school without walls. Through careful planning
and new development of educational funds and personnel, our
parks, factories, museums, shops, government agencies, and
a myriad of other community entities can become literal
components of a broad educative environment. Not only
will the school and educational process be viewed as inter-
dependent with society, but they will be viewed with a
sense of excitement and anticipation. Students will be
humanly stretched, challenged into new areas of growth, and
offered the possibility of encountering peak experiences.
In addition, they will become aware of such external
challenges as environmental deterioration. Perhaps they
will appreciate the complexity of the problems involved in

environmental concern and will develop a sense of respon-
sibility. Being responsible entails caring for others and
for our environment.

The greater the rate of change, the greater is
the need for a sense of security, a good self-image. The
teacher believes that if we achieve the educational goals
which he proposes, a child will be able to develop a good
self-image. The child's self-image will be projected
forward to developing in the child a wholesome, achievable,
future-focused role-image. Such an image delineates what
he can become; a role that can be filled with dignity,
self-respect, and the satisfactions to which they lead in
both present and future. The type of image here envisioned
presumably would strengthen the learner's purposes and
motivation. Individuality would be prized and increased
rather than diminished to fit contrived norms. The
challenges of the future require the cultivation of varied
talents.

The Teacher's Beliefs

The teacher believes that the two primary factors
contributing to his students' 'behavior' exceptionality are
home conditions and school failure.

He believes that if he is to change his students'

behavior and to develop interpersonal relationships which
he views as the goal of his class, he has to develop their
self-concept, develop rapport, and provide for successes
at school. (He believes that he can't do much about home
conditions.) He also believes that learning needs to be
active and fun. He believes that these concepts are
related--that a student's self-concept will increase if a
student develops good interpersonal relationships and has a
great deal of school success.

He believes that the "school system had failed"
the boys through such educational practices as school
retention, grading, neglect of individual differences,
irrelevancy, and traditional structuring of classes which
causes boredom and relies heavily on paper and pencil
activities.

At a meeting for parent(s) or guardians of the
boys, he stated his belief in a lot of activity because he
himself finds it hard to sit for any length of time; he,
himself, finds it hard to sit quietly, and he can under-
stand that others might feel the same way.(01-12-88)

The teacher also believes that active engagement in
activities keeps the boys occupied and "out of trouble."
On one occasion, he mentions that the boys seem a little
bit unsettled but he can't blame them as they didn't have
anything to do. He states that he understands what it is

like to have nothing to do. He says that when he had
nothing to do in school he would misbehave and the
teacher would make him write out dictionary pages—a
practice in which he does not believe.

Further, the teacher confided in the researcher
that he knows what it feels like to sit for long periods of
time without moving and he understands how students might
misbehave. "I used to be a problem. Just ask Mr. R. He
taught me in grades six, seven and eight. He'll tell you."
(01-12-88)

The following is recorded during that same conver-
sation. Mr. P. says that,

> I want the students actively engaged
> in activities, because I know what it
> is like to have to sit all day and do
> paper and pencil work. I know how
> much more fun and enjoyable school is
> when involved in activities and that's
> one reason I'm trying to have the
> students involved in activities.(01-15-88)

During another interview, Mr. P., the teacher,
stated,

> You know, I really feel for these boys.
> They remind me so much of me. That's
> why I always try to have activities.
> I want them to have fun learning. I
> have a hard time just sitting and writing.
> (01-26-88)

In addition, the teacher states his belief that
many activities, for example, arts and crafts, are not only
fun but "therapeutic." Not only that, but all students can

be successful when engaged in activities such as arts and crafts, simulations, and fieldtrips. None is made to feel like a failure.

The teacher says that although he doesn't believe in retention or grading, he does believe in evaluation. He likes to note through observation and anecdotal comments where the student is initially and how he progresses. He makes use of a "frameworks" approach as often as possible.

Mr. P. indicates his belief that the home and school need to work together. He tells parent(s) "not to hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any concerns." (01-12-88) This belief is further revealed by the fact that he is in touch with each home on a bi-weekly basis.

A Typical Day in the Behavior and Adjustment Class

In order to give the reader an understanding of what occurs in the Behavior and Adjustment Class studied, the following is a description of a typical day. The description is a composite drawn from field notes:

8:45 a.m. I arrive in the classroom clad in my jogging clothes--pink sweater and black pants. Mr. P., the teacher, is at his desk cutting out small pieces of paper. Beside his desk sits Ken who is taping the small pieces of

paper onto various toys (eg. small rubber ball, green rubber alligator). I learn that Steve and the teacher had gone to the Boutique Shop on Saturday to buy the toys. The toys are given as rewards. Each is worth so many points. For example, the small rubber ball is worth four tokens and can be traded for after a student has been student of the day four times. (Being student of the day is worth one token.) Standing beside Ken is his mother, Mrs. Panto.

Jack and a boy named Chris from the grade seven class are also in the room helping. They are putting papers on the wall.

Someone is constantly knocking at the door. Everyone ignores; no one opens the door.

Mr. P. looks up smiling and says, "Someone is always rapping on the door."

Jack says, "Yes, everybody wants to come into this class."

8:55 a.m. The bell rings. The teacher goes to the door and opens it. The boys line up quietly and enter. They go to the puzzle table and begin to work quietly on the puzzle. Rose Mason who is the teacher's aide, Mr. P., and I sit down at the puzzle table also. Everyone seems to interact easily.

"Mrs. Somme, are you coming to the fitness lab with

us?" asks one of the boys.

"Yes," I respond.

The National Anthem booms over the loudspeaker. The teacher says, "Please stand and face the flag."

Everyone does. The teacher sings; Rose sings; I sing; and one of the boys sings. Mickey puts one foot on a chair; he does not sing. No one comments on this. When the National Anthem is over, the boys sit at the table. The day's announcements are heard: there are two types of ice cream, and, recess time has been changed. We all sit down at the puzzle table and chat about going to the fitness lab.

9:30 a.m. Mr. P. tells the boys that they can get on their coats; that we are now ready to go to the fitness lab. The fitness lab is located at the university approximately four miles away.

Mr. P. says that he, Mrs. Mason, and I will drive. Mickey, and John ask, "Sir, can we go with Mrs. Somme?"

"Is that alright with you?" Mr. P. enquires.

"Sure," I say.

We all head out. As we head toward my car, Mickey says, "I get the front seat."

John says, "I'll sit in the front to the fitness lab; you sit in the front on the way back."

"O.K.," John says obligingly.

We get into the car.

Mickey asks, "Miss can I put my tape on?"

"As long as the words are O.K.," I say cautiously.

I put on my seat belt. Mickey puts on his; John puts on his. As we're pulling out of the school ground, John says, "There's George."

Mickey and John look. They roll down the window. "Go to the front of the school," they yell.

George looks blankly at us. He does not seem to understand. After a few seconds, George starts running toward my car. John opens the door and George gets in. He says that his grandma just got him to school.

As we drive, the boys talk with me as well as with each other.

"Have you ever been to Atlas College?" one of them asks me.

"Yes," I reply.

"How was your weekend, George?" inquires John.

"Fine," George says.

"You know what?" John says. "I'm getting an electric guitar for my birthday."

"Oh, Miss Somme," John blurts out, "Do you know where the Dufour Centre is? We just passed it. That's where my mom works."

"Does she work shift work?" I ask, already knowing the answer.

"Yes," John says.

Mickey tells us that he won't be at school the rest of the week. He's taking the bus the following day to go to Elton Town to visit his brother. He says that once he get to Elton Town he has to walk in about twenty miles.

9:45 a.m. We're in view of Atlas College.

Mickey says, "Turn in here. Oh, Mrs. Mason is already here. See, Miss, that's where we go. You can park over there."

When the car stops, the boys get out. They lock the door as they do. Mickey and George run ahead to the portable building which houses the fitness lab. John walks with me.

We enter the building to find Steve and Mrs. Mason already inside. Mr. P. arrives shortly after us with Jack. Mr. P. says that Mickey will be 'tested' this morning.

Mack, the kinesiologist who has initiated the fitness program, invites Mickey to where the testing is carried out. He asks him to sit down. For the next hour, Mickey undergoes tests. Mack uses the calipers to measure body fat. The boys go to the various fitness stations in the lab and use various exercise machines.
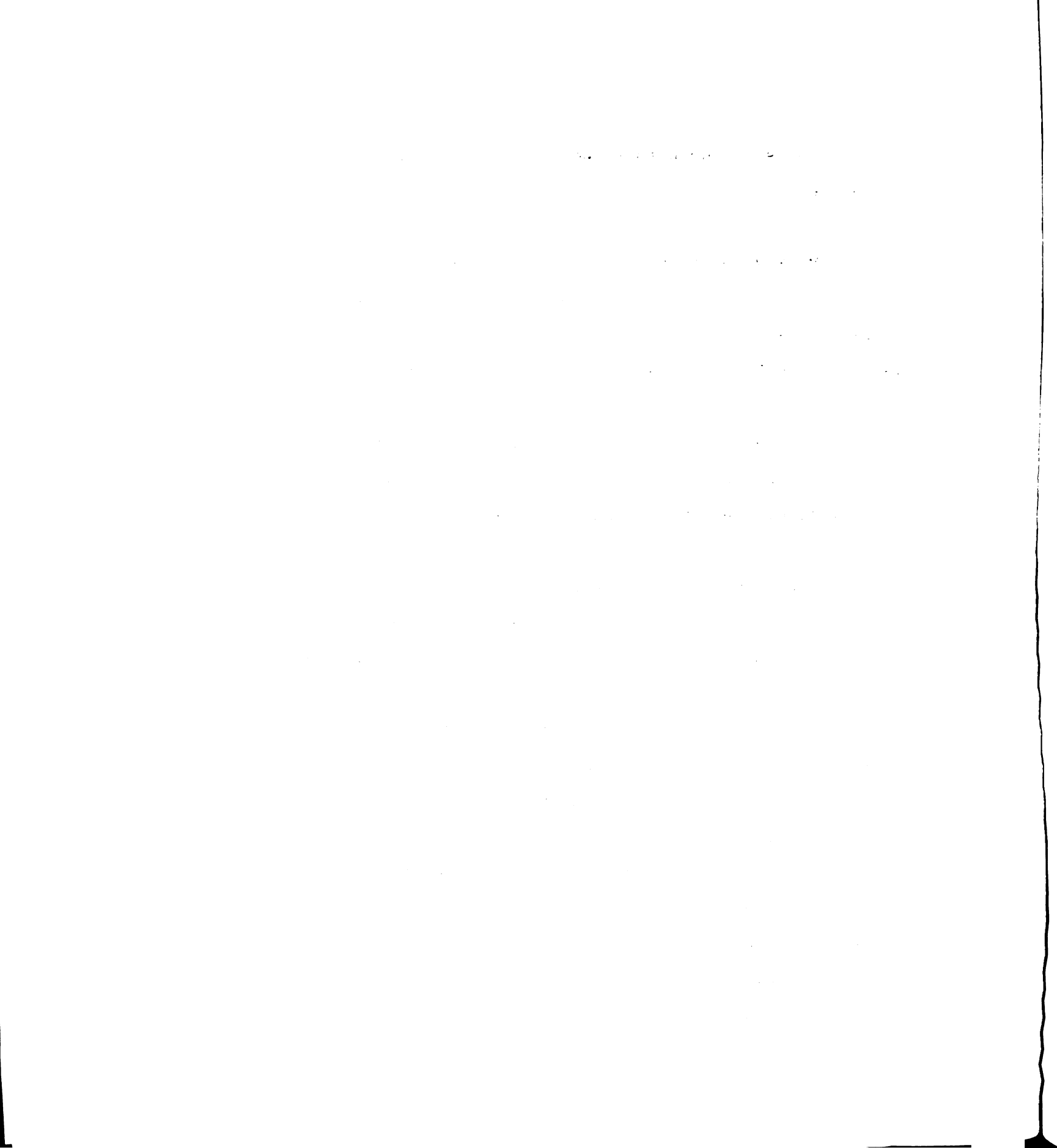
10:30 a.m. The teacher says, "It's time to go."

"Are we coming back tomorrow, Sir?" asks one of the boys.

"Yes," says the teacher.

We all don our coats and boots. George and John run ahead of us. They get into my car.

George says, "I sit in the front."

"No, I do," says John.

John sits in the front. Mickey and George sit in the back.

As I pull out, George says, "Go out here," pointing to the entrance.

I quietly say, "That is the entrance. This is the exit."

Mickey asks if we can listen to his tape again. We put the tape into the cassette player.

Mickey and George say, "Louder."

I put up the volume.

"Louder," they say.

10:45 a.m. We arrive at the school. The teacher tells the boys that they can stay outside for ten minutes.

10:55 a.m. The bell rings; the boys come in. The teacher asks how their recess went. One by one, the boys

tell how things went. The teacher then puts tokens into individual containers of those who had a 'good' recess.

11:00 a.m. The teacher asks the students to complete sheets on which, during their fieldtrip to the grocery store the previous day, they had recorded the costs of various items, eg. meat, fruits, vegetables, and other goods. Each student is requested to add up the cost for each group of food and then find the cost of all the groceries.

Steve wiggles around in his desk stating he can't do it. While Mr. P. is helping George, he turns and asks me if I could help Mickey. I go over to help Mickey, who appears to be having difficulty.

When I ask if I can help, he says belligerently, "I can do it myself." I remain near him and see that he does not understand the work. I take a piece of paper, line up the figures and point. It is obvious he does not know his addition facts by rote because when I point to the '5' and '7', he draws stick marks and then adds. We work through one group and then another. With a sigh of relief and a sense of calm, Mickey says, "I get it." He continues to work--seemingly more comfortably.

I walk over to Ken who shows me his work and asks,

"Is this right?"

"Yes," I reply, after checking it. He smiles easily and continues to work.

Meanwhile, Steve keeps wiggling around in his seat with nothing on his desk. Soon Mr. P. tells the boys that they can give their math sheets to Mrs. Mason.

11:20 a.m. On the blackboard is a framework (a chart with rows and columns). At the top of one row is written 'Go'; at the top of another is written 'Grow'; and at the top of the third is written 'Glow'. The teacher asks, "What is the food group that makes you go?"

Someone blurts out the answer.

"Remember to raise your hand please to answer a question."

The boys raise their hands.

"Yes, George?" the teacher asks.

George's answer is not 'right on'.

"Do you know the name of the nutrient?" The teacher pauses.

George hesitantly gives another incorrect response.

"Good try."

Ken blurts out, "Protein."

The teacher raises his arm to remind Ken that he should raise his arm to answer. Ken then raises his arm.

"Ken?" the teacher asks.

"Protein," Ken replies.

"Yes," the teacher says.

The teacher works through the other two categories also. The boys with some prompting and lots of encouragement remember that meats make one 'grow'; fruits and vegetables make one 'glow'.

"Alright," the teacher says. "Let's move your desk here George, and your desk here Jack."

He then says, "When I give you one of these (a colorful cut-out of various foods), please put it in the correct category."

Two teams are formed. Mr. P., the teacher, gives the first boy in each team a food cut-out and asks each boy to put it on the blackboard. Each student goes up to the blackboard, gets a magnet, and puts the "food" on the blackboard. As soon as each returns, the next person on the team takes a food cut-out, goes to the blackboard and returns. The game continues in this way until all "foods" are put on the chalkboard. The boys then sit at their desks.

Mickey comments, "We finished first."

The teacher then says, "Let's see if the foods are in the right place. First, we look at the 'Go' column.

Does this belong here?"

"Yes," says Ken. "It's cereal."

"Oh, I can see why someone put the cereal here then. It's my fault. It's really meant to be cottage cheese."

"Then it goes under the 'Grow' column."

"Good."

The boys are blurting out responses occasionally.

When all items have been checked, Mickey remarks, "What do we do next?"

Mr. P. gives each (including myself) a sheet and says, "Now we're going to make worms--'Go Worms', 'Grow Worms', 'Glow Worms'."

The boys look intent and very interested.

"Think about the kind of worm you want to make."

After a few seconds, he asks each what kind of worm he wishes to make. Each responds.

The teacher says it appears that we all wish to make the same kind. He says "I know what. I'll give each of you a piece of paper. On it, write your name and the name of the worm you wish to make."

Each thanks the teacher for the paper, writes his name and the name of the worm. Mr. P. collects the pieces of paper, puts them in a box, shakes the box, and asks each to take out a slip of paper. He then records the name of

the person beside the name of the worm. This time there are two names beside 'Go Worm', two beside 'Grow Worm', and one beside 'Glow Worm'.

He tells the boys to take their seats in the Language Arts Room. They do. He tells me to sit to the right of Steve. I do.

The teacher gives each of us an egg carton. "I want you to use the materials on the desk to make your worms." On the desk are scissors, pipe cleaners, glue, shiny gold and silver paper, and construction paper.

We each construct our worm. The teacher walks around. George asks how he can make his worm a 'Grow Worm'.

The teacher suggests he think about it. "Would an elastic be useful?" he inquires.

"Can I get one?"

"Yes," the teacher replies.

Jack who is sitting beside me, looks at my worm and says he likes the sparkles I've put on.

Mr. L., the principal, walks in and looks at what we're doing. "How are you today, boys?" he enquires.

"Fine," or "Good," they reply.

"That's good."

He talks with us for a few minutes. Mr. P. tells him that the craft is related to the nutrition unit. Mr.

L. observes for a few more minutes and then says, "Bye."

The boys say, "Bye."

George asks if he can borrow the sparkles. We seem to finish at about the same time.

The teacher says that we can put our worms at the side when we're finished and we can clean up. He notices that Mickey no longer is working on a worm. Mickey says, "I threw mine away."

"Do you want to get it?" Mr. P. asks.

"No, I broke it all up."

"Would you like me to help you?"

"No," Mickey says.

"Would you like another egg carton, Mickey?" Mr. P. calmly inquires.

"No," Mickey responds.

The teacher says that it's almost lunch time. One by one as we finish up, we clean up, and return to our seats. The teacher then comments on the "Good working," and says a name.

12:00 p.m. Each student's name is called one by one and he is allowed to get his lunch.

12:05 p.m. The teacher eats lunch with the boys. The boys chat easily as they eat. When they are done, the

teacher tells the boys that they can go outside.

12:35 p.m. The boys come in. The teacher again
checks to see how their outdoor break went. Each responds.
A token is again placed in the container of those boys who
indicate that they had a 'good' break.

12:40 p.m. The teacher tells the boys that they
can take out their library books and read. Mr. P. says
he'll listen to Steve read and asks Rose to listen to Ken.
She does.

     Mickey asks, "Can I get a book from the side?"

     The teacher says, "Yes."

     Mickey then asks me, "Can I read this book to you?"

     "Is that alright, Mr. P.?"

     "Yes," he replies.

     "Let's go into the Activity Room, Mickey, so that
we don't disturb the others."

     He and I go to the Activity Room. I flick on the
light and close the door. He pulls out a chair and
indicates where he'd like me to sit. I sit directly in
front of him. He reads the book about monsters. On each
page is a 'pop-up' scene. After reading a page to me, he
turns the page toward me. We are both laughing.

     We go back into the room and Mickey asks Mrs. Mason

if he can read the book to her. They, too, go to the
Activity Room but do not close the door. I see that Mickey
is reading the book in the same manner and she is laughing.
They return to the class.

George, I notice, is unusually restless today. But
everyone is ignoring his behavior. John and Jack are
quietly reading.

1:15 p.m. The teacher asks the boys to put away
their library books--that it is now time for their writing
lesson.

He demonstrates an upper case "A".

"To make that, we use ⦰⦰⦰⦰⦰. (He demonstrates the
strokes on the blackboard). What do we call these?"

"Vertical slants," one boy responds.

"Good. What are these-- ⦰⦰⦰⦰⦰⦰ ?"

"Half vertical slants," Jack responds.

"Good. Please practice making "A", the vertical
slants, and the sentence, on the sheet I give you."

"What is the sentence?" Jack asks.

"Aunt Antaluk goes to Australia," the teacher
writes. He checks the spelling of 'Australia'.

"Sir," Ken asks, "aren't we suppose to make..." and
he comes to the blackboard to demonstrate   .

"You're right," the teacher says. "I'm sorry. I

apologize. When you're finished, remember--you can color the cartoon on the page."

1:30 p.m. "Yesterday you said that you would like to make canoes. So today we are going to make some. Let's go into one of the other rooms."

We all go into another room.

"Here are the materials," the teacher comments.

The teacher and boys sit on the floor crafting canoes from twigs, wire, and birch bark.

Steve asks me to help. We work on a canoe together. I become frustrated because each time I put the wire into one of the holes that has been punched in the bark, it rips. I stop and let Steve continue. Each student works intently.

All of a sudden, Ken throws his materials down. Everyone ignores. Ken says, "I don't want to do it!"

The teacher says, "That's your choice, Ken. If you don't want to do it, please take your seat."

Ken goes to the main classroom and takes his seat. The teacher goes in occasionally to check on him.

I go in. I see Ken drawing. He says, "I'm making a pop-up book in my process-writing class. I like to draw."

"You're a good drawer," I say. "Didn't you like to

make the canoe?"

"No, it's too complicated," he says.

Mr. P. tells me that the 'crafting the canoe' activity is a result of the social studies unit in which they are discussing the Ojibway. The boys had asked if they could build canoes. They had talked about what materials were necessary and how they would build one.

2:10 p.m. Recess. The boys go outside to play.

2:30 p.m. The boys return; the teacher checks how their recess was. The boys then clean up the activity on which they were working before recess. Mickey uses the vacuum. Kevin washes the table. When finished cleaning, the boys go to their desks. Mr. P. counts up each boy's 'points' for the day and gives the boys their daily reports. Mickey is student of the day.

Mr. P. notices that Steve has stamps on his page that he (the teacher) has not put on. He asks the aide, "Mrs. Mason, did you put any stamps on Steve's page?"

"No," she replies.

Steve is smiling.

"Steve, did _you_?"

Steve says nothing. The teacher says nothing.

2:45 p.m. As each of the boys leave, Mr. P. says "Bye." We each say, "Bye."

Interactions

The description of a typical day in the Behavior and Adjustment Class as well as other data presented should help to elucidate interactions that occurred between the students and teacher, student and student, and, to a lesser degree, the teacher and principal.

Student-Teacher Interactions

These could be described as friendly and co-operative. The students seemed to have a genuine liking for the teacher and the teacher for the students.

Student-Student Interactions

The students interacted quite well when actively engaged in learning in which they were meeting success. When not actively engaged in activity and meeting success, however, the student might refuse to do the activity, might use inappropriate language or might become belligerent.

Principal-Teacher Interactions

The data indicate that the teacher felt at ease approaching the principal, and vice versa. The principal came into the room on a regular basis to see the students. Indeed, the teacher commented on the principal's support. It was because of this support that the teacher had much autonomy in decision-making related to curriculum; it was because of this support that continuous progress and modifications that were in line with the teacher's perspective were able to be made.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was guided by four exploratory questions which were enumerated in Chapter I. In this chapter, the data presented in Chapter IV are analyzed and responses to the exploratory questions are presented.

The First Exploratory Question

The first exploratory question was:

Do the students who are identified as having a behavioral exceptionality have anything other than the exceptionality in common?

An analysis of the data indicates that the students do have a number of characteristics in common.

Firstly, it was observed that all students in the class were male. Caplan has "reported that boys were more likely to be referred to special education than girls in spite of identical behavior problems."[1]

From informal conversations, interviews, and documents, it was learned that the boys were between the ages of ten and twelve; that they (83%) came from low socio-economic backgrounds; that three of the six boys

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[1]P. J. Caplan, "Sex, Age, Behavior, and School Subject as Determinants of Reports of Learning Problems," Journal of Learning Disabilities, 10, pp. 232-235.

(50%) lived in single parent families (although at times, one of the other boys did, too); and that home conditions were generally poor. The families seemed to be in transition a great deal.

Health reports state that hearing and vision of the boys are normal; health is generally good. One boy has allergies; another has frequent colds and coughs-- otherwise no notable health problems are reported.

There were a number of characteristics found to be common in their school histories. Three of the six students (50%) had repeated two school years, and two of those three (66%) had been in a Special Education class other than one for 'behavioral' exceptionalities. Data indicate that five of the six students (83%) had first been referred for an educational assessment before the age of seven and a half and that the reason given for referral of three students was that they were experiencing academic difficulties. Indeed five of the six students (83%) had repeated kindergarten or grade one and were candidates for retention again, and these five were presently at least two years behind their chronological peers in academic achievement in the areas of math and reading.

This seems to support the research. Mastropieri, Jenkins, and Scruggs state that findings by Glavin and Annesley,

showed that 81.5% of the behaviorally
disordered group were underachieving
in reading and 72.3% underachieving in
arithmetic.[2]

Mastropieri, Jenkins, and Scruggs also report that

research by Schroeder supports the hypothesis that

"emotionally disturbed children were deficient at all age

levels with respect to school achievement."[3] It would

appear that studies by Tamkin, Stone and Rowley, and

Schroeder support this, too.[4]

Another characteristic which the boys had in common

was their self-esteem. According to a rating scale

administered in the fall, all of the boys had a low self-

concept.

Data indicate that the boys are in the low average

to average range of general intelligence. The mean I.Q. of

the group was found to be 93. This finding seems to be

consistent with reported research.[5]

The number of schools attended by the students

ranged from three to eight. Upon investigation, it was

found that the number of schools that a student attended

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[2]Margo A. Mastropieri, Vesna Jenkins, and Thomas E.
Scruggs, "Academic and Intellectual Characteristics of
Behaviorally Disordered Children and Youth," Monograph In
Behavioral Disorders, p. 97.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid. p. 87.

appeared to be related to his placement in Special

Education classes. For example, the boy who attended only

three schools had remained in his home school until a year

and a half before he was placed in a Behavior and

Adjustment Class. At the end of one year in that class,

the location of that class was moved to another school.

The boy who attended eight schools had attended his 'home'

school, and then five Special Education classes.

Failure is defined as "a failing to perform a duty

or expected action," or "a falling short."[6] It appears that

all of these boys had experienced failure which appears to

have been compounded by factors related to home and school.

Data gathered from this ethnographic study would

seem to support the research on the effects of school

failure reviewed in Chapter II that school failure appears

to have no positive effects. Children gain little advan-

tage academically; additionally, self-concept is damaged.

The Second Exploratory Question

The second exploratory question was:

What themes emerge in the Behavior and
Adjustment Class?

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[6]Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary,
(Markham, Ontario: Thomas Allen & Son Limited, 1983),
p. 445.

TABLE 3

% Of Students With Characteristics Related To Home--

Characteristic	%
Low socio-economic background	87 %
From single parent family	50 %

TABLE 4

% Of Students With Characteristics Related To School--

Characteristic	%
'Failed' one school year	83 %
'Failed' two school years	50 %
Referred for educational assessment by age 7 1/2	83 %
Reason given for referral-experiencing academic difficulties	50 %
Reason given for referral-experiencing behavior problems	50 %
Achieving below chronological peers in reading	83 %
Achieving below chronological peers in math	83 %

Three dominant themes emerged: active engagement
in learning; use of various control techniques; and
ongoing evaluation and modifications.

Active Engagement in Learning

On every occasion in which this researcher visited
the Behavior and Adjustment Class, she found that the
children were actively and physically engaged in an
activity. The first day, she dropped in to find the boys
putting together a puzzle. On other occasions, the
children were making marionettes, writing a script, con-
structing a stage, and videotaping their plays. Other
activities involved painting a mural about a story; making
worms out of egg cartons, construction paper, pipe cleaners
and other objects; cutting a pumpkin and cooking the
seeds; constructing geoboards out of pressboard, pins, and
paper; making geometric shapes out of straws. The activi-
ties were numerous: using clay to make dinosaurs; tracing
their bodies and cutting out a double image, painting, and
stuffing the image to make a 'Shadow'; painting a map onto
a board.

In addition, fieldtrips, simulations, and special
events were a regular part of this active engagement in
learning.

Indeed the activities which the teacher believed

were 'therapeutic', he believed were also fun and
relevant. Many of the activities in which the children
engaged, involved painting, sculpture, crafts, and
photography. According to Adele Kenny,

> Any of the visual art forms (painting,
> sculpture, crafts, printing, photography)
> can serve as vehicles through which
> troubled students find comfort and a
> route toward healing.[7]

Kramer states that art is "a means of supporting
the ego, fostering the development of a sense of identity,
and promoting maturation in general."[8] It appears that art
is a means of therapy--it helps one to feel more
comfortable, to get in touch with oneself, to release
anxieties and reduce stress; to communicate.

Use of Various Control Techniques

As mentioned in Chapter IV, a predominant theme
that emerged was the variety of control techniques: turn-
taking; use of language and voice; use of "ignore";
suspension/consequences; use of positive reinforcement;
and teacher attention.

The control technique employed was related to the
teacher's perspective. The teacher used whichever method

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[7] Adele Kenny, "Counseling the Gifted, Creative, and
Talented," GCT, (May/June, 1987), p. 33.

[8] Edith Kramer, Art As Therapy With Children, (New
York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. xiii.

he believed most effective. For 'small' misbehaviors, use of 'ignore' was employed; after the third incident of swearing, suspension was employed. Approval is a means of positive reinforcement. Teacher approval appears to be an effective method of encouraging on-task behaviors and discouraging inappropriate behavior.

In this study, the teacher gave only positive feedback. This, too, may account partly for the on-task behavior of the students when engaged in activities.

Evaluation And Modifications

The data indicate that evaluation of students and program occurred on a continuous basis. The teacher seemed to be asking, "Why did this happen?" or "What might I have changed?" or "What might I change?"

He engaged in much introspection. As a result, changes were made. He approached the principal about changing the school day; about changing the length of the lunch period; about obtaining the aide for a full day; about partial integration of students; about reverse integration of students.

Summary

An analysis of the data reveals that what occurred in the Behavior and Adjustment Class as evidenced by the

three dominant themes--active engagement in learning, use of a variety of control techniques, and ongoing evaluation and modifications--was a result of the teacher's perspective. Influencing his perspective were his goals about education, his beliefs, and the interactions that occurred.

The Third Exploratory Question

The third exploratory question was,

What are the teacher's beliefs about education which support his perspective?

The teacher believes that a primary effect of school failure is low self-esteem. He concurs with Kauffman that school retardation and maladaptive behavior are concomitant. From the teacher's perspective, the school and its educational practices are responsible for failure. He is in agreement with Dr. William Glasser, who contends that "it is school and school alone which pins the label of failure on children."[9] Accompanying this label are the many psychological consequences. Glasser points out that education is a process that begins at birth and continues throughout our lives. In the pre-school years, a child learns a great deal about life and is

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[9]William Glasser, Schools Without Failure, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), p. 26.

reasonably competent when he enters kindergarten. He comes to school hopeful and optimistic about what is ahead of him and with a sense of self-assurance that he can deal successfully with his world. None comes to school labelled a failure.[10] The teacher also believes this.

According to Dr. Glasser, the single basic need that people have is for 'identity'. Identity "is the belief that we are someone in distinction to others, and that the someone is important and worthwhile."[11] Identity is made up of two elements--love and self-worth. These are closely intertwined. A person who can love and receive love will be a success to some degree. Self-worth, achieved through knowledge and the ability to think, should give the individual enough self-assurance to be able to give and accept love. A successful identity is achieved by one through love and self-worth. Those without a successful identity have a failure identity. Few, if any, Dr. Glasser contends, have a mixed identity. A person feels the psychological consequences of failure or success.

The teacher believes that specific educational practices which help to increase or cause a failure identity are grading and classification of students, the use of the normal or 'bell' curve, objective tests,

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[10] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[11] Ibid., pp. 13-34.

closed-book examinations, punishment, excessive and un-
reasonable homework, irrelevancy and the heavy emphasis
on memorization as opposed to thinking and problem-
solving. Grading is a poor educational practice because
it encourages students to place too much emphasis on
grades--to feel, perhaps, that the grades are a most
important result of education, rather than to put the
stress on the process of education--where it belongs.
Most grades, in addition, are only measures of one's
ability to memorize certain facts. They do not promote
thinking, judging, evaluation or criticism. Further,
grading systems differ not only from school board to school
board, but also from school to school, and as any teacher
will attest to, from teacher to teacher.

C. C. Ross made an interesting statement related to
grading forty years ago which this researcher ventures to
say still holds true today:

> It seems too bad that the marks received
> by certain individuals are conditioned
> more by the contour of the face than by
> the contents of the head.[12]

He further stated,

> Pupils' handwriting, conduct, language
> ability, seating position in the class,
> and ratings on personality factors such
> as respect for authority and co-operative-
> ness are significant in determining their

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[12]C. C. Ross, Measurement in Today's Schools, 2nd
edition, (New York: Prentice-Hall Co., 1947).

> marks, as well as the condition of fatigue
> or boredom the teacher happens to be in
> when the marks are awarded.[13]

Grades, according to the teacher, generally set universal

standards for all pupils ignoring the principle of

individual differences.

> As Ernest O. Melby states,
>
> ...(grades) say nothing meaningful about
> a pupil...(Grading) leads us to measure
> the outcomes of our educational programs
> in terms of what people know, when we
> ought to be measuring them in terms of
> what people are and are in the process
> of becoming.[14]

Grading, then, is often restricting and damaging

for life. As mentioned, often grades are equated with good

behavior and poor grades with poor behavior. In some

schools, children are not permitted to take part in extra-

curricular activities unless they maintain good academic

standing. Grades are recorded and often are used as a

basis for admittance or rejection to higher institutions

of learning and into many areas of the labor market. These

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ernest O. Melby, "It's Time for Schools to Abolish the Marking System," Contemporary Issues in Educational Psychology, edited by Harvey F. Clarizio, Robert C. Craig, and William A. Mehrens, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1981), p. 178.

actions smack of classical conservatism.[15]

It is interesting to note, also, that studies have found that grades often are unreliable indicators of how successful an individual will be in his work. For example, a 1964 survey by a group of doctors reported that there was almost no relationship between grades that a student obtained in medical school and his proficiency and success in medical practice.[16]

Before a child goes to school he is given many chances to learn. If he doesn't do something correctly, he is shown a better way to do it without being labelled a failure. Grades are often restricting in that people are labelled 'failures' because of them and are refused a second or third or fourth opportunity at doing something-- often on the sole basis of grades. As Melby asserts, grading "destroys the self-concepts of millions of children

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[15]Adrian M. Dupuis, in Philosophy of Education in Historical Perspective, (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1985), states that extra-curricular activities were not considered important by the Romans and were assigned to other agencies in order that the school "could concentrate exclusively on its intellectual function," (p. 68). This is what is suggested when children are not allowed to partake in extra-curricular activities because of grades. Further, classical philosophers believed in some type of evaluation as a means of eliminating those who would not be rulers.

[16]William Glasser, Schools Without Failure, p. 61.

every year."[17] This can only encourage a feeling of frustration and failure.

Underlying Mr. P.'s use of a 'frameworks' approach for evaluation is his dislike of assigning grades. He believes that they promote cheating, take away valuable time, are inaccurate, and can lessen the warm relationships that he wants to have with his students. He believes that the normal curve, objective tests, and closed-book examinations related to grades are poor educational practices. The normal curve, used by many teachers, is a poor educational practice because it requires that there be so many A's, B's, C's, and D's. Thus, a good student may receive a C grade, depending on the 'population' and this may harm or reduce his desire to learn. He may feel that no matter how hard he tries, he can do no better than a 'C'. The poor student who receives a 'D' no matter what his ability or effort is really defeated. In addition, the normal curve may cause tension and poor relationships. Students, knowing that they are to be marked according to the normal curve, are often unwilling to share their ideas with others and may purposely lead them 'down the garden path'. Objective tests are poor because they stress the 'certainty principle'--that there is a right or a wrong

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[17]Ernest O.Melby, "It's Time for Schools to Abolish the Marking System," p. 178.

answer to all questions. Furthermore, most objective tests

require that one regurgitate memorized facts; they offer

little opportunity for one to express his own ideas.

Closed-book exams, the usual type of exams administered in

elementary and high school, likewise emphasize memorization

and regurgitation.

The teacher indicated that as often as he referred

to his students as the 'Enrichment Group' or 'Room 10',

they were labelled the "bad boys."

This classification of students is another

mediocre educational practice that perhaps leads to

failure. Heffernan claims that,

> ...this vicious practice has evil effects
> on both children and teachers, the clouds
> of "low expectancy" permanently settle over
> the lowest third of the pupil population;
> once assigned to the lowest third, a child
> may have received a life sentence of failure.[18]

In many cases, a child's potential and achievement have

been tagged early in his school career—possibly as early

as the first grade. Norris Brock Johnson's narrative of

classroom life illustrates this. Discussing the 'low' and

'high' kindergarten sessions (where students have already

been tracked according to ability), he indicates that a

teacher says of the 'low' session children that they are

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[18]Helen Heffernan, "Challenge or Pressure?",
Children Under Pressure, (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E.
Merrill Books, Inc., 1966), pp. 30-31.

just slow and she does not expect anything of them.[19]

Johnson says,

Schooling is caste-based to the extent
that once on a particular track, no matter
how hard he or she works, a child's mobility
from one track to another increasingly be-
comes difficult if not impossible.[20]

Johnson goes on to say that:

Rank in school becomes an expression of
personal value and worth and early grade
teachers assume that high session children
work more because they are higher.[21]

The teacher stated his belief that the assigning

of excessive and often irrelevant homework is damaging.

This is in agreement with Heffernan's contention. It

does not teach children to use their leisure in creative

enterprises, and it is "difficult to find a more effective

way to destroy initiative and creativity."[22] According to

the teacher, most children are successful before entering

school because they are able to use their intelligence to

solve relevant problems, such as learning to dress

themselves. Furthermore, there are no rigid time limits.

Upon entering school, problem-solving, thinking, and

relevancy become less important and memorization more

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[19]Norris Brock Johnson, West Haven, Classroom
Culture and Society in a Rural Elementary School, p. 86.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 87.

[22]Helen Heffernan, "Challenge or Pressure?", p. 26.

important. Children then are less motivated to learn. In later years, irrelevancy may cause them to drop out or to fail.

The teacher believes that in so far as the fact that the school ignores sex differences, it is responsible for school failure. Bentzen and others have found that at the chronological age of six, girls are about one year ahead of boys developmentally and by the time girls are nine years of age, boys lag eighteen months behind girls on the average. Bentzen has indicated that the

> higher incidence of language disorders,
> behavior disorders, general stress,
> blindness, and physical handicaps among
> boys correlates directly with the pressure
> put on boys to compete with girls of the same
> age.[23]

In an experiment carried out by Kagan in which he asked second-grade children whether such school objects as books, desks, and chalkboards were appropriate to males or females, both sexes responded by perceiving such objects as feminine in character.[24]

The teacher believes that another poor educational practice relates to the way in which classes are

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[23]Frances Bentzen, "Sex Ratios in Learning and Behavior Disorders," National Elementary Principal, 46 (1966):13-17.

[24]Robert H. Anderson and Cynthia Ritsher, "Pupil Progress," in Encyclopedia of Educational Research, (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association), 1969.

structured. Often a teacher stands at the front of the class and attempts to direct the learning—ignoring learning principles, learning conditions, and the principle of individual differences.

In an attempt to recognize individual differences, the teacher involved the students in planning the curricula; he provided experiences that he thought would help the students become independent problem-solvers; he recognized the students' feelings.

In addition, the teacher recognized learning conditions. He provided a climate of respect; a climate of acceptance; and, a climate of openness.

The Fourth Exploratory Question

The fourth exploratory question was:

How do students respond to what occurs in the Behavior and Adjustment Class?

Interestingly enough, these boys always appeared "on-task" when actively engaged in learning in which they were meeting success. These boys usually behaved when actively engaged in learning.

When not engaged in activities and when doing nothing, the boys appeared to misbehave. It was at these times that one boy chased another, one boy made noises, one boy hit another. Could it be that they were bored?

Could it be that these were means of entertaining them-
selves when not actively engaged in learning?

When frustrated with some work that the child felt
was too difficult, he resorted to inappropriate behaviors.
An example of such an incident follows:

> Can you find triangles inside of these
> pictures?" the teacher asks Steve. "It's too
> hard. I can't. I don't want to do it," Steve
> replies. "Mrs. Somme will help." "O.K." Both
> proceed to find pictures with a triangle inside.
> Steve glues his pictures on his pink triangular
> shape. He smiles. (01-13-88)

As the researcher reported, the theory of
methodology employed was that of Symbolic Interaction. The
researcher, through active engagement in the activities,
was able to 'capture' the student's perspective.

As field notes state,

> Being a participant helps me to know
> what it is like for the children.
> Painting is so relaxing. It seems so
> therapeutic. When doing nothing, I am
> bored, but when painting, I feel a
> calmness. (01-14-88)

After another visit, the researcher wrote: "Again,
I found the painting to be relaxing..." (01-18-88)

The researcher then, by participating in the
activities, was able to view the activities from the
student's perspective.

Becoming a participant-observer allowed the
researcher access to all activities in the class; it
allowed her personal familiarity with the students,
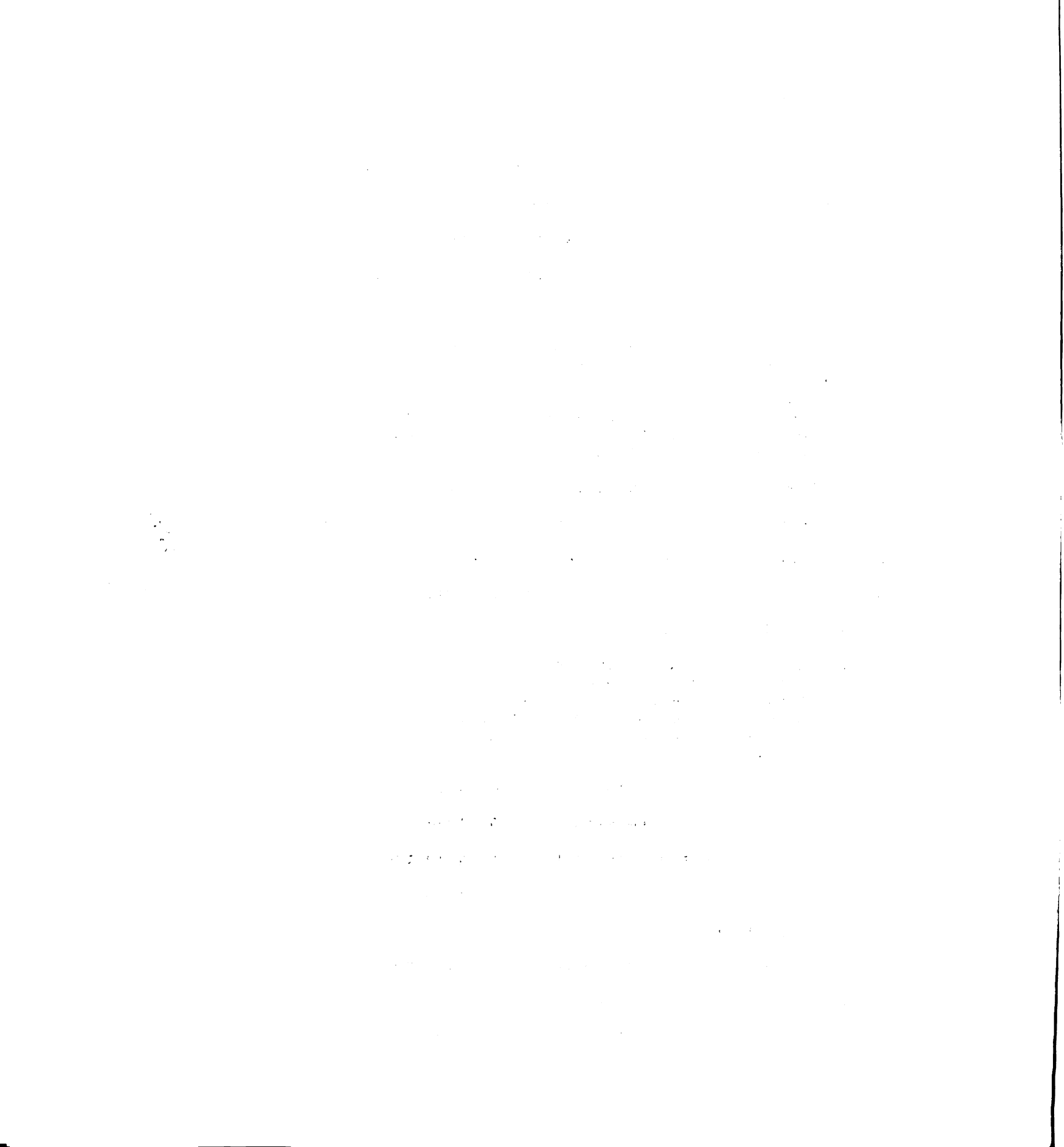
teacher, and teacher's aide; it helped her to understand
things from the perspective of an insider.

From the student's perspective, it is fun to be in
this classroom. As one parent said, "School is the center
of my child's life"; as another parent commented, "My
child enjoys school this year more than ever before."

The researcher could understand this. She,
herself, found that she enjoyed being in this class. She
found the activities fun, relevant, and enjoyable. When
not actively engaged in learning, she found herself bored.
But, when painting or creating a sculpture, she found
herself 'relaxed'.

Interaction when actively engaged was 'relaxed';
'comfortable'.

Becoming a participant-observer provided a means of
occupying her time, of conversing with the students, of
being one of them, of not feeling bored--of 'entertaining'
oneself. As she realized how much better she felt being
one of them and being actively engaged in learning, she
realized how important it was that the students be 'enter-
tained'.

Becoming a participant-observer taught the
researcher what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment
Class--the students are 'entertained'--they actively engage
in various types of activities. These activities provide a

purpose--they alleviate boredom and promote a feeling of usefulness.

While only observing, the observer was bored and didn't know what to do with herself. Once she became involved in painting a mural, making a craft, exercising, or a chat, she felt better. She was no longer bored; no longer isolated. Being involved in an activity gave her a feeling of belonging, a feeling of satisfaction. The activities give purpose. 'Learning by doing' gives purpose.

Through conversation, the observer discovered why some students engage in some activities and not in others. They like activities in which they feel successful and are actively engaged; they feel more confident or competent doing a particular activity, e.g. using the computer or painting; some want to be with certain people; some enjoy the activity for itself. The activities then are meeting needs.

One outcome of engaging in the activities is that these activities provide social interaction. Interaction is the ability of the members to communicate with one another, influence one another, make group decisions and react to one another. Students ordinarily preferred to interact or communicate with others.

According to George C. Homans,

A great deal of social activity--dances,
parties--is enjoyed less for the sake of
the activity itself, which may be trivial,
than for the possibilities of social inter-
action it affords.[25]

Another outcome of engaging in the activities is
the formation of loosely connected social ties by the
students which might be explained by "a theory of the
social organization of friendship ties,"[26] based on Homans'
"concepts of activities, interactions, and sentiments and
upon the concept of extra-network foci organizing social
activities and interaction."[27]

According to this theory, a focus is defined "as a
social, psychological, legal, or physical entity around
which joint activities are organized."[28] Thus, each of
the activities (e.g. painting a mural, making egg carton
worms, baking cookies), could be considered a focus. As a
result of the interaction that takes place around the same
focus, individuals--in this case, the students--become
"interpersonally tied and form a cluster."[29]

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[25]George C. Homans, The Human Group, (New York:
Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), p. 119.

[26]Scott L. Feld, "The Focused Organization of
Social Ties," American Journal of Sociology, 86(5):1015.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., p. 1016.

[29]Ibid.

As Feld states,

> In the focus theory approach, a social
> context can be seen as consisting of a
> number of different foci and individuals,
> where each individual is related to some
> foci and not to others. A group's activi-
> ties are organized by a particular focus
> to the extent that two individuals who
> share that focus are more likely to share
> joint activities with each other than two
> individuals who do not have the focus in
> common.[30]

Through interview, this researcher found that the

students tended to be tied by their connection to the same

activities (foci). Indeed, their sentiments also seemed to

be similar. When asked, "What do you think about what

you're doing?" the responses were: "Well, I get to be with

my friends," or "I get to talk to my friends," or "It would

be boring if we had to work by ourselves." It seems that

relying upon Homans' behaviorism in the context of the

social structures of foci that

> shared relations to foci create positive
> sentiments indirectly through the generation
> of positively valued interaction (i.e. shared
> relations to foci bring people together in a
> mutually rewarding situation which encourages
> the development of positive sentiments)."[31]

Feld asserts that those related to a particular

focus (which in this study is each of the various

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[30] Ibid.

[31] George C. Homans. The Human Group.

activities), "tend to form a separate cluster."[32] He

mentions that

> although all foci organize the acti-
> vities of a limited number of people,
> they vary in size. Small foci organize
> the activities of very few people, while
> large foci organize the activities of
> many people.[33]

From the descriptions of the activities in this

study, one can see that this is so. When the activity was

drawing, or using the computer, interaction was limited;

when the activity was a simulation, a mural, or 'Hot Dog

Day', more students could interact.

Implications

It appears that a 'behavior' exceptionality is

concomitant with school failure and poor home conditions.

If this is so, the more that the home and school work

together, the more likely it would appear that students who

have a 'behavior' exceptionality will be helped. Thus, it

seems that an implementation plan--a plan which sets out

goals, strategies, and persons involved--might be

established as soon as the student is identified as having

a 'behavioral' exceptionality at the I.P.R.C. meeting.

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[32]Scott L. Feld, "The Focused Organization of
Social Ties," p. 1017.

[33]Ibid.

Persons involved should probably include the parent(s) or guardian(s), the school, the student, the counsellor, and perhaps outside agencies--such as the police. Involving the latter would help the students view them in a positive light. The plan should probably involve counselling that might be helpful in changing behavior. There are implications here for teacher training as well.

According to Caplan, boys are more likely than girls to be referred to special education, "in spite of identical behavior problems."[35] This researcher did find that males were more likely to be in Behavior and Adjustment classes. She asks, "Why is this so?" She also found that not one child was from a higher socioeconomic home. "Why is this so?" Perhaps these are areas which further study could explore.

In response to exploratory question number two, "What themes emerge in the Behavior and Adjustment Class?", the researcher concludes that the themes that emerged in this Behavior and Adjustment Class are a result of this classroom teacher's goals, beliefs, and interactions. These result in the teacher's perspective. Questions then are raised--Could what occurs in another Behavior and

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[35]P. J. Caplan, "Sex, Age, Behavior, and School Subject as Determinants of Reports of Learning Problems."

Adjustment Class be different? It appears that the answer
is "Yes." If administrators believe that this class is
successful and would like to promote the same kind of
success, what might be done? It appears that a teacher
whose perspective is in line with this teacher's
perspective might be sought; it appears that the same
themes might be encouraged. Will that guarantee success?
--No--But other studies might be carried out to determine
whether or not the dominant themes that emerged might make
a difference. For example, there may be implications for
more active engagement in learning in all classes. This
may extend from Special Education classes to regular
classes.

Since active engagement in learning seemed to be
helpful in developing interpersonal relationships and
fostering on-task behaviors, there are implications for
more financial resources to be provided for the class as
well as a look at how other Behavior and Adjustment classes
are functioning.

The teacher in this study was extended autonomy to
make curricular decisions which fit his perspective. His
ongoing evaluation resulted in modifications which seemed
to improve the program. Maybe there is an implication for
future research to explore teacher autonomy in decision-
making related to the curriculum.

Exploratory question number three, "What are the teacher's beliefs about education which support his perspective?", examined the teacher's beliefs about education. The teacher used an ungraded structure, continuous progress; he had the students actively engage in activities such as simulations, fieldtrips, and arts and crafts, which he believed were fun, relevant, and 'therapeutic'. These activities fit in with his educational goals. Although only employed with a small group, could the ungraded structure--continuous progress--not extend to other classrooms?

In response to exploratory question number four, "How do the students respond to what occurs in the Behavior and Adjustment Class?", it was found that the students were on-task when actively engaged in learning in which they felt successful.

Had these students experienced successful school years, would they still have experienced 'behavioral' difficulties? We don't know. What would be interesting to explore is whether the school successes which they are experiencing this year will change their behavior. Furthermore, will they again become 'behavior' exceptionalities when they are re-integrated into the mainstream? How might mainstream experiences be changed to help these children and perhaps all children? The above questions

are generated from analysis of the fourth exploratory question.

Summary

This exploratory study was designed to describe and explain what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class. In order to gain the perspective of teacher or student (insider), methodology employed was participant-observation. The researcher participated in the events of the classroom as well as observed. According to Charon, "To gain a perspective is to understand the other through taking his or her role and to come to share that perspective."[36]

The study found that:

1. Students do have characteristics other than their 'behavioral' exceptionality in common. They 'share' many characteristics related to home and school. In general, they come from single-parent families of low socio-economic background. Additionally, they have experienced much school failure.

2. The themes that emerged in the Behavior and Adjustment Class--the active engagement in learning, a variety of control techniques, the ongoing evaluation and modifications by the teacher--were associated with the classroom teacher's and/or

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[36]Joel M. Charon, <u>Symbolic Interactionism</u>, p. 103.

students' perspective. The classroom
teacher's perspective was shaped by his
goals and beliefs about education as
well as his interactions.

3. The teacher's beliefs about education
which support his perspective, recognize
the principle of individual differences
and healthy learning conditions. The
teacher believes in educational practices
that foster these and provide successes.

4. The students when actively engaged in
learning in which they were meeting success,
behaved well, appeared 'on-task', and de-
monstrated good interpersonal relations.

This study is significant for the knowledge it
provides about what occurs in one Behavior and Adjustment
Class--the activities, processes, and interactions. It
provides knowledge of the 'culture'. Indeed, the study is
also significant for its implications for possible changes
that can be made in the Behavior and Adjustment Class
studied, as well as for the implementation of educational
practices in other Behavior and Adjustment classes, other
Special Education classes and regular classes.

It is necessary, however, that caution be exercised
in generalizing from this particular case. Although a case
study is concerned with particularization rather than
generalizability, some of the findings might be generaliz-
able to other classes.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

When I began this study, I began with a broad orientation, "What occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class?" I wanted to capture the 'culture' of the class. I soon found that the concept was too vast--that I needed to be more specific. More specific guide questions were delineated. However, as the study proceeded, as often happens in ethnographies, the questions changed to some degree. For example, "What activities take place in a Behavior and Adjustment Class?" was changed to "What themes emerge in the Behavior and Adjustment Class?" Everything that occurred in the class seemed to be 'activity'. Therefore, I began to focus on the dominant themes--what they were and why they were.

On a personal level, what occurred in the Behavior and Adjustment Class affected me. I hadn't realized how one could become so emotionally involved during a study. I found that I became angry when I realized that schools and their educational practices were to some degree responsible for these students' predicament.

I hadn't realized the amount of soul-searching that would result--the issues, questions, comments with which I would grapple. "I really care about these kids, you know," the teacher had said. And I believe he really

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does care. He's making a difference. But what will happen to these boys when they are re-integrated into the mainstream? I wonder.

Janesick states, "Ethnographic research is a deeply personal and active endeavor."[1] I concur.

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[1]Valerie J. Janesick, "Reflections on Teaching Ethnographic Research Methods," <u>Anthropology & Education Quarterly</u>, Volume 14, (1983), p. 119.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Cecile Somme, a doctoral student at Michigan State University, has my permission to include my child as a subject in her study.

I understand that the purpose of the study (to be done over a two to three month period, during the 1987-88 school year) is to describe and explain what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class. I understand that she will observe and participate in classroom events as often as is possible.

I also grant Mrs. Somme permission to obtain any necessary documents that might assist in the study and/or to conduct interviews with persons involved in working with the students and teacher of the class.

I understand that the study has been explained to my child, as well as myself; that my child freely consents to participate and that he/she is free at any time to discontinue being a part of the study without any penalty whatsoever.

I understand that the information will be treated with strict confidence and that the subjects will remain anonymous.

In addition, I also recognize that within the restrictions of confidentiality and anonymity, results will be made available to me (as the parent/guardian of the child).

_____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT

_____

DATE

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APPENDIX C

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

I grant permission to Cecile Somme, a doctoral candidate in Educational Administration at Michigan State University, to conduct ethnographic research (field study) in my Behavior and Adjustment Class.

I understand that the purpose of the study is to describe and explain what occurs in a Behavior and Adjustment Class and that the methodology to be employed is that of participant-observation. I understand that the study is to be carried out over a period of two to three months, during the 1987-88 school year. Mrs. Somme, I understand, will visit the class as often as possible by 'popping in' when she is able. She will also try to participate in out-of-class activities (i.e. a field trip) in which the students are involved.

I understand that the subjects freely consent to participate; that the subjects are free to discontinue being a part of the study at any time without recrimination; that the information will be treated with strict confidence; and, that the subjects will remain anonymous.

I understand that the study has been explained to the subjects and that they understand it, including any inherent risks.

In addition, I also recognize that within the restrictions of confidentiality and anonymity, results will be made available upon request.

_____
SIGNATURE

_____
POSITION

_____
DATE

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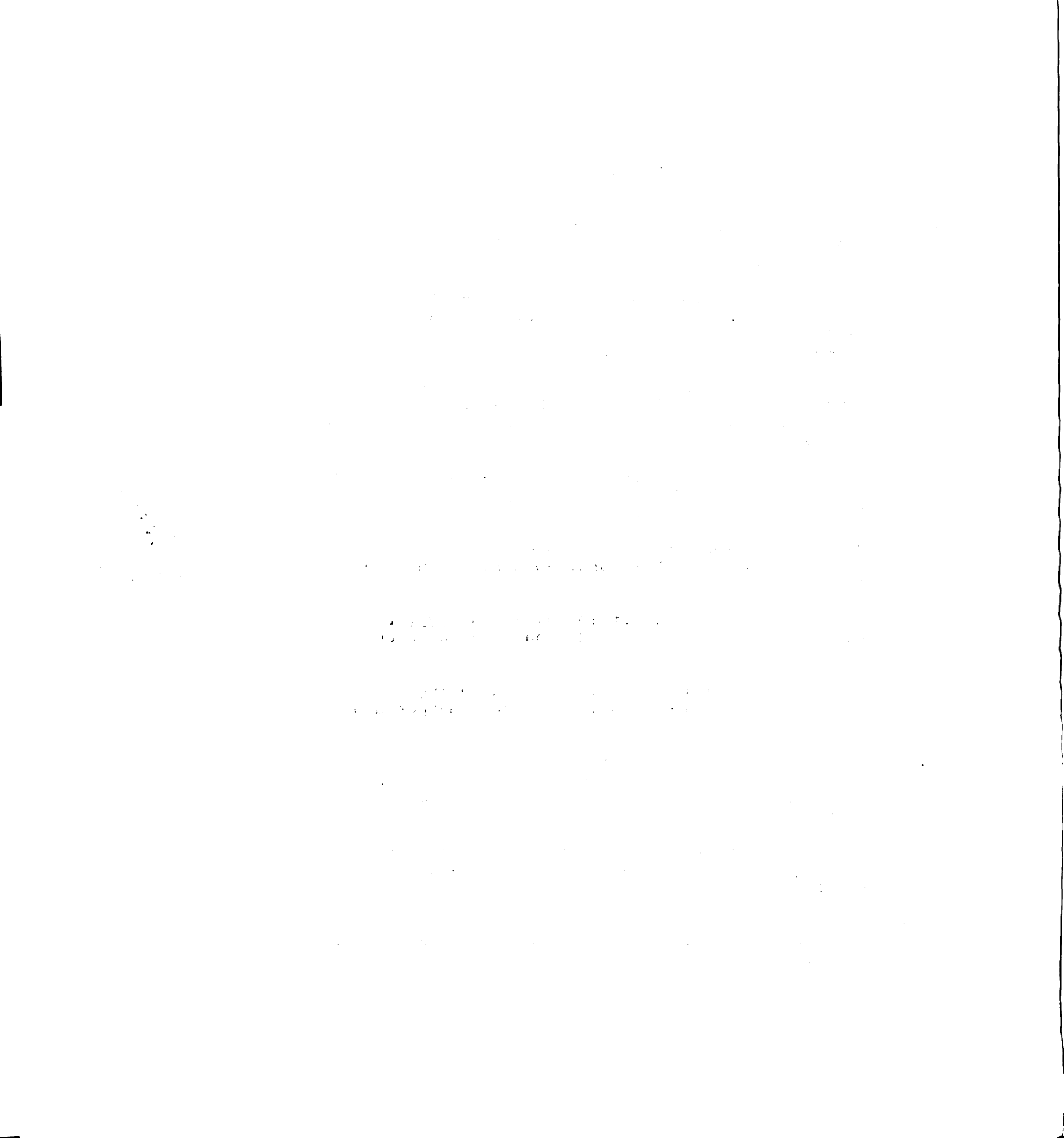
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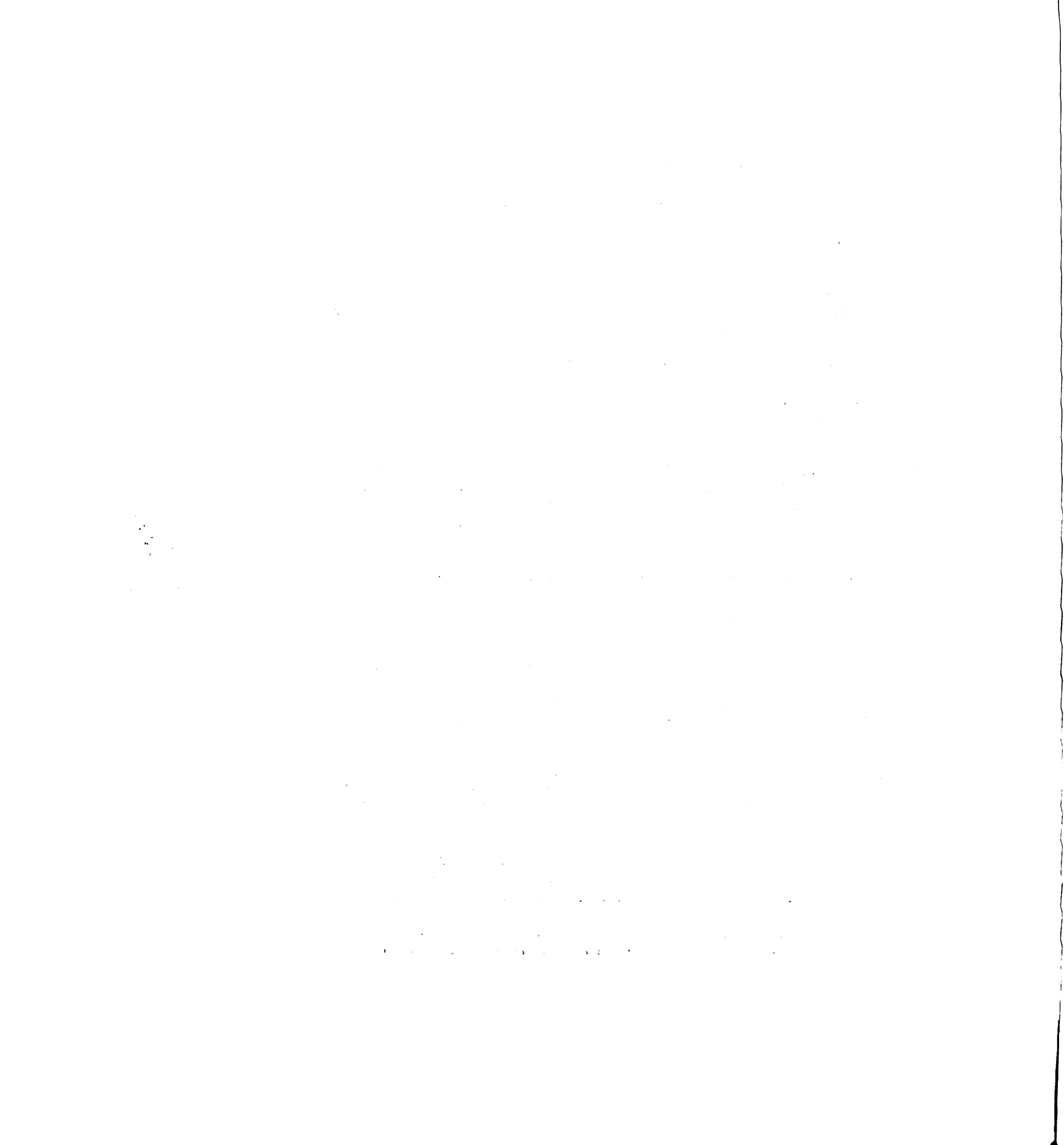
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